THE

BECKONING ROAD

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THE BECKONING ROAD

BOOKS BY

CAROLINE DALE SNEDEKER

THE PERILOUS SEAT

THE SPARTAN

THERAS AND HIS TOWN

DOWNRIGHT DENCEY

THE BECKONING ROAD

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"Who is it? What do you want?" Dencey demanded.

THE BECKONING ROAD

By

CAROLINE DALE SNEDEKER

ILLUSTRATED BY

MANNING DEV. LEE

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TO MY AUNT

ANNA OWEN CRAWFORD

Whose life as a young girl in New Harmony
first brought Dencey to mind
I dedicate this story of
our beloved town

PREFACE

IT seems that I must assure my readers that New Harmony, Posey County, is a real town—real enough indeed for me to be born there. I must also assure them that the astonishing things done in New Harmony were really performed. Robert Owen did buy the town outright, did give it to the uses of the Community.

The Rappites who had built the town and lived in it did go away, all of them in a single day, leaving it to the Communists.

The Boatload of Knowledge floated down the Ohio as I have described and the geniusy scholars were aboard of her. The following persons in the narrative are real persons, some of whom I have actually met, all of whom I have met at second hand—that is I have met men and women who were their friends. My grandmother told me the stories about them.

ROBERT OWEN
WILLIAM MACLURE
ROBERT DALE OWEN
WILLIAM OWEN
ALEXANDER LESUEUR
THOMAS SAY
MADAME FRETAGEOT
LUCY SISTAIRE
VIRGINIE DUPLAIS
FRANCES WRIGHT

RICHARD OWEN
DAVID DALE OWEN
VICTOR DUPLAIS
AMADIE DUFOUR
JOSEPH NEEF
MADAME NEEF
VICTOR NEEF
WILHELMINA NEEF
MARIA GARCIA
RIVER JORDAN
HUGH MACHUGH, Lord of the Isles and Earl of Starr (fictitious name).

As to MacGinn and Siezler, those are not their real names. My grandmother told me that everyone in town knew who had done the deed but nobody felt like accusing the persons openly. So I never knew the names nor actual characteristics of these two persons.

CAROLINE DALE SNEDEKER.

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THE BECKONING ROAD

CHAPTER I

A STARTLING PROPOSAL

TOM and Lydia Coffyn sat by the keeping-room fire. It was August, but they had the fire because of the three-weeks-old baby which Lydia held on her lap warming the tiny pink feet. Tom's eyes rested on the baby wonderingly. He had two children, but he had not been at home at the birth of either. The "West Coast" when Dencey was born, and "Rounding the Horn" when Ariel came.

"I did not suppose they were so small," he said, leaning over to marvel at the little face which was already so strangely familiar. "She's the image of thee, Lydia. She had the good taste to choose right."

"Dionis chose thee," Lydia maintained. "And I don't hear thee saying Dionis is ugly."

"Thee don't hear anybody else saying it either. Bob Merrill, for instance."

"Yes, I do," Lydia returned. "They think she's too dark."

"But not Bob Merrill, I'll wager."

They sat in quiet; now and then Lydia crooning to the baby—not quite singing. She was too strict a Quaker for that. Tom moved his hands restlessly a moment. Then he spoke.

"Lydia, I want to ask thee something. It's been on my mind a long while, but I haven't said anything. I wanted to wait till thy trial was over."

She looked up startled, listening.

Tom began to talk fast, as though he wanted to put it all to her before she had chance to answer.

"What would thee think, Lydia, if I gave up the sea? Everybody would call me a fool, I know that. And it is foolish I guess, the idea I have. And I may as well confess that if I give it up I wouldn't go into business here. I'd—well, I'd give it up because I could do what I've longed to do. It's dogged me all these years. I'm always hoping I can get time for it and I can't. Dumbfoolishness! I know that." He hesitated before the plunge.

"It's my botany. And the reason I'm thinking of changing off is I've got a chance to go into it se-

riously. With some of the best scientists in the country—in the world! There'll be geologists (that new science thee knows. I've told thee about it). And conchologists, that's shells; ichthyologists—that's fishes. And educators from the best universities in Europe. But everybody's given a chance."

Lydia began to look at him as though he had taken leave of his senses.

"Yes, I know. It sounds impossible. And the town is 'way out West. Thee'd have to leave Nantucket. It's an awful thing to ask of thee, Lydia, and for such a queer reason. But I'd manage to support thee."

Lydia did not answer. She bent upon him again that dazed, inscrutable look of emotion. Then hastily she laid the baby in its crib and fled from the room.

Tom sat nonplussed, looking into the fire like a shamefaced boy. Lydia was the practical one of the family. Of course, she saw the foolhardiness of giving up a good ship whose voyages had always done well for this utterly wild scheme.

He sighed and got up.

"Well, I guess I may as well go and take my medicine," he said resignedly; and climbed up the stair. At the top step he thought he heard something like stifled sobbing. Did she feel so bad as all that? He hurried to the room.

Lydia was on her knees. As he threw open the door she sprang up, wiped her eyes, and faced him. Utter composure! Had she really been weeping? Gracious, this Quaker self-control. Would he ever get used to it?

"Why, Lydia, of course I'll keep to the whaling if thee thinks best. The children cost a lot, and there's little Sally too now—and Steve's children."

"Oh, Tom, no, no, no," the emotion struggled up visibly into her face, but she choked it back. "It's that I'm so glad—so glad. It seemed as if this time I couldn't let thee go. It's been on my tongue to beg thee to give up the sea. But I thought—but I thought I hadn't the right."

Tom put one arm about her.

"Back up! Look here, Lydia. I don't know whether I'm on the reefs or in the current. Does thee mean thee wants——"

"Oh, Tom, I'll go with thee anywhere!" She broke into sudden expressiveness. "Just so I'm with thee. Not these years and years of separation. Tom, I've just died every time thee has gone away."

Tom kissed her like a lover. He was laughing with happiness.

"But, Lydia, I warn thee. This is the wildest scheme thee ever heard of. A man out in Indiana has bought a town—a whole town—and is giving it to people to try some queer experiment of living

democratically. Robert Owen is his name. Some people say he isn't even a Christian, and it's 'way out West, his town. We'd probably never see our Nantucket again."

Lydia gasped at this, but she was valiant.

"Yes, that's dreadful—to give up Nantucket. But we would be together. And if this strange town were really wicked thee wouldn't stay there."

"No, of course not. Robert Owen is approved by the Prices and Sistaires of Philadelphia Meeting. I know that much."

He still held her, for she was white as sailcloth and trembling pitifully.

"I ought to be keel-hauled for telling thee so soon," he said contritely.

"Thee should have told me beforehand. I'll get strong right away now. Oh, I can't believe it—I can't believe it, that thee isn't going away from me. Listen, the baby is crying."

They went down to the keeping room together, where Lydia took her small daughter from the crib and sat again by the fire—calm, serene as before.

"But, Lydia," pursued Tom, "why did thee run away like that?"

"I had lost my self-control," she answered.

Tom, a "convinced Quaker" and not a Quaker by birthright, still did not quite understand. But he was quickly back to his absorbing theme.

"It was Friend Baxter of New London told me about the town. He knows the Sistaires and Prices of Philadelphia, who are going. They are all of Philadelphia Meeting, so thee will not be without some of thy own people."

"Where is it?" she asked.

"A town called Harmony, in Indiana."

"What a pretty name. That's as far west as Pittsburgh, isn't it?"

"Rather farther," he laughed.

Lydia could place Callao in Chile, Sandwich Islands, or Tahiti. But the "Continent" was a vague place.

"It's in the woods, Lydia—the great forest. Pioneer life it will be. But with pioneer opportunities. And the education for the children! Of course, our Coffin School is great, but this is something new. The sciences taught and the newest discoveries. A Scot named Maclure is at the head of the schools, free to everybody in the town. That's generous, don't you think? A man from Paris will teach the Peztalozzian system, whatever that is."

Lydia's eyes lighted. To the New Englander education was always a pearl of great price.

"And the man who has bought the town—Robert Owen. Some say—well, Lydia, they say he's sold himself to the devil. But Price says he's a great-hearted, great-minded man. Breaking new ways.

They say he has just that one idea of helping humanity. In Scotland he has founded a town that is so clean and virtuous and happy that people come from all over the world to see it. The Czar of Russia came, and Elizabeth Fry."

"Elizabeth Fry," repeated Lydia. That name weighed far more than the Czar of all the Russias. Lydia was listening like a wild-eyed child, still dazed by the newness.

"I'm frank to say I can't follow all the queer schemes, but the man Robert Owen certainly has a peculiar effect on people. Whenever they get to talking about him—Baxter, Price and the others—their faces begin to light up with a kind of warmth and love. I actually saw tears in Price's eyes when he said, 'Whatever men may say, Robert Owen is a good man—a good man.' Price gave me this."

As if he had at last found courage to show it, Tom went over to his desk and got from the drawer where he kept his flower book a poster. He spread it before her.

Lydia put down the baby, gave the poster her full attention.

ROBERT OWEN'S MANIFESTO

Printed in flaring type, full of high-sounding words. Lydia's eye ran swiftly over the unbelievable paragraphs, catching such things as these:

A *New Society* about to be formed at Harmony in Indiana. Sole object, to promote the happiness of the world. Persons of all ages and descriptions are invited save *persons of color.*

Lydia did not like this. Why should Negroes be denied?

No member to own private property. Property to be in common. The Committee will provide dwellings for members on their arrival.

"But will they *give* us a house?" she queried.

"It seems so," said Tom. "See, it says all members must bring kitchen furniture, spades, hoes, axes, rakes, etc. Those things we must provide. It seems very little."

"Was the new country as new as that?" she wondered. A coin unminted to receive any stamp men wished to give it. What would it be like—this town that called itself a society? She went on reading:

Never under any provocation must a member act unkindly or unjustly, never speak in an unfriendly manner. Members are to receive living, comfort, education for their children, such as the Society affords. Old age, sickness, accident, medical aid will be given for all these, and every kindness.

Then the words of Robert Owen:

"I do not intend to hide from you that the change will be great. Old things will pass away, and all shall become new."

Old things would pass away. Lydia seemed to be walking forward into a blankness where no

footing was. All familiarity left behind. Nantucket with its dear, well-trodden ways, neighbors, cousins, Silent Meeting (the intimacy of that). All would be gone. For a moment Fear reared its head in Lydia's mind. Then her God-trust took hold of the accustomed helm, and Lydia sailed free.

She gave back the paper and took the baby upon her lap.

"When do we go?"

"Gracious!" said Tom, laughing at her Quaker directness. "I don't know yet. There'll be much to do. Steve's children, for instance. We must provide for them."

"It's hardest of all to leave them," said Lydia, her voice breaking a little on the words.

"But, Lydia, thee has cared for them now for eight years—surely thee has done enough."

"There's never *enough* in such things," she answered. "But Jane is a woman now. She can take the care."

Tom laid his hand over hers.

"I'll write to Robert Owen at once. And, by the way, Lydia, for the present let's just tell Sally about it."

"Sally? The baby?" she repeated. "Why should——" Then, seeing his eyes: "Does thee mean not to tell anybody?"

"Yes, just that exactly," said Tom.

CHAPTER II

THE NEWS IS TOLD

BUT it so happened that the startling news of the Coffyn move came out very soon.

Friend Baxter arrived at Nantucket with a cargo of ship's spars. He was Tom Coffyn's guest. He had a story to tell of an unfortunate Dan Huggins of New London who had been all fitted out to go to Ohio with his family. He had two horses, a fine wagon, smaller than a Conestoga, but of the Conestoga type, and all the necessaries for the journey—when he had suddenly died.

"The widow will sell the whole of it for a hundred dollars. It's thy chance," he declared.

Again Tom consulted Lydia. One could go West these days by coaches and the new steamboats. Many changes and discomforts. The way of the

pioneer wagon had its discomforts, too, but it was independent and much cheaper. Lydia could take household necessities and treasures that were not to be dreamed of in the other journeying, and at the end the horses would be invaluable.

Lydia took an hour alone to decide, and as a result Tom bought the outfit. Then next day at dinner he told the assembled family.

It was like stirring a stick into a hive of bees.

"Going away!" cried Steve. "Not away from Nantucket!" exclaimed Kanah. Then all of them at once. "But why? Why are you going? Who'll take care of the little ones here? What will Grandfather do?"

Dionis sat still, dazed with the excitement, her eyes shining like stars.

"Father," she said, leaning toward him, "will I see Boston?"

"No, child, we are not going that way. But thee'll see New York. That's almost as good, and probably Washington and the new Capitol building."

"Oh," she said, "all that!"

She sat still, apparently eating her plum broth while the news swept through her mind like a beam of light touching all things to gold.

"Why, it'll be as wonderful as a voyage," she said.

"Yes," assented Father. "Only we will be plod-

ding step by step instead of sailing before the wind."

Sometimes Dionis asked very stupid questions. She did so now.

"Father, we'll come back in four years, won't we?"

"Why, no, child." Father looked uncomfortable. "I certainly hope we'll come back some day to visit, but we must abide in the new life."

Not coming back to Nantucket! The room suddenly seemed queer to Dionis—the voices of everybody curiously distinct, yet far away, as sounds when one is drowsing off. She put down her spoon and ate no more plum broth. The beam of light quickly went out.

After dinner she helped Peggy with the dishes; then sat by the kitchen fire rocking little Sally to sleep. Peggy was sniffling about the kitchen.

"Goin' off as if Nantucket wasn't good enough for 'em. I'll go with her, that I will." (She meant Lydia.) "I don't keer whether she wants me or no."

Mother was very busy. The keeping room was full of people. All the neighbors. The news seemed to have flown on wings of its own.

Dionis could hear the eager talk.

"Lydia, when did Tom decide it? I can't understand. His voyages have all been good. Even last voyage it was eighteen hundred barrels of oil."

"It's Tom's decision," said Lydia. "Of course, I'll do as he says."

Tom Coffyn came in.

"When will thee tell the Meeting?" they asked him.

"Next First Day," he answered. "We must get our minute as soon as possible."

"Where will thee present it?"

"At Richmond in Indiana. There's a large meeting there."

"Then thee'll live in Richmond?"

"Well"—Father's voice sounded uncomfortable again—"we are likely to go to a town farther on. There are quantities of new towns. We'll write thee about it."

"But surely thee wouldn't live among the world's people?"

"There are a number of Philadelphia Friends going," said Tom evasively. "We hope to live with them."

Mother was very bright and alert talking to the neighbors, but Dionis, glimpsing her through the open door, read unmistakably the look in her face. She always read her mother that way. The look gave Dionis a vague sense of tragedy. Though she might disagree with her mother, yet she always had an uncomfortable sense of Lydia's wisdom.

After the baby was asleep Dionis took out the

dress she was making for Hannah. Hannah, the little cousin who had lived with them since she was a day old.

"I'll never make any more dresses for Hannah," she thought strangely as she stitched the seams.

Martha White's Nancy came in. She was younger than Dencey and regarded her with adoration.

"And now thee is going to see the world," said Nancy with envying eyes. "Why, it's as good as a voyage. Better. 'Cause then thee just sees water all the time. Thee'll see New York. That's lots bigger than Nantucket."

"Yes, but not so nice," said Dencey.

"But Philadelphia is—just as nice, and there's the Liberty Bell we read about in history. I think thee's wonderful. Wonderful things always happen to thee!"

Dencey began to glow.

"Father says we'll often walk beside the wagon—walk through the deep woods where the trees are not little like ours, but as tall as the Unitarian Church. And, and he says he's going to teach me to shoot a gun. He says I should depend on myself in case of panthers or *bears.*"

"Oh!" breathed Nancy, delighted.

Then Lydia came in and asked Dencey to go to Aunt Rhoda on Fair Street. Aunt Rhoda had been housebound for fifteen years.

"I don't want her to hear the news from others. It might startle her. Tell her I'm coming soon to talk it over."

So Dionis put on her bonnet and went, happy with a sense of adventure and great news.

She found Aunt Rhoda in her usual corner of her immaculate dining room.

"Yes, child," she answered Dionis's announcement. "I heard all about it at ten minutes after one."

No news ever escaped Aunt Rhoda. The very walls seemed to tell her.

"I can't think what Tom Coffyn means by it. It's dreadful, uprooting his family like that. We'll none of us ever see Lydia or thee again!"

"Yes, thee will," Dionis asserted. "Thee will."

She went out hastily, for the vague dread was upon her again.

"Never coming back to Nantucket." It was beyond comprehension. Nantucket, to which she seemed rooted, as were its twisted little trees. Rooted and marked with Nantucket effort and life. The houses she was passing, how poignantly familiar. From that white doorway, where they used to live, Father had gone away to sea—the first time she could remember. He had come back again. But now—now they would not come back. And there—the small square window where Grandma Severance used to sit and watch for her after school.

She hurried out of Fair Street and climbed the hill to the windmill. Someone had brought wheat to grind, and the great sails were swinging round against the sky, a solemn lordly movement, as though they knew their important task. Then Bob Gardiner took the warm meal away. Sam Joy, the miller, put the brake on the great wheel and began to strip the sails for the night. Dionis climbed up in the fragrant flour-sifted tower and looked out of the window.

Below lay the whole of her island, the benign sweep of the Commons billowing away with blue shaded hollows and saffron heights. And drawn about all the distance, as with a huge compass, lay the severe clean circle of the sea. Dionis had never been "Off Island." Her circular world lay at her feet under the dome of her sky. Somewhere out on those Commons, that "Common land" of all Nantucketers (shut off by a gate from the individually owned town), Dionis herself had her native right to three sheep pastures. She had never thought of that ownership before, but now it was very strange, the giving up of that inalienable thing.

She moved nervously to the other window. From here the sunset lighted harbor, the shipping—the town. The town nestled very sweetly at the foot of the sloping road—the white edged gables facing this way and that, close as little chicks in a nest.

Gray protecting roofs! Blood kin to her had been almost every hand that had touched and made those roofs. Blood kin the folk that dwelt beneath them.

The dear many, many chimneys sent out each its wreath of smoke. That was Aunt Mary Gardiner, Aunt Phœbe Folger, old Mrs. Joy boiling her kettle for five o'clock tea, that custom unknown on "the Main," but kept by Nantucketers from their Old England days. Dencey knew every chimney, every kettle, the taste of every tea, the bannocks and beach-plum jelly they were sure to have with it.

There along the road came old Silas, the town shepherd, driving home the cows from the Common Plantation.

Suddenly Sam Joy's head peered up through the hole of the stairway.

"Dence Coffyn, I'm closin' for the night. What's thee doin' up there anyway? That ain't no place for a girl."

And Dencey came hurriedly down.

CHAPTER III

DENCEY'S PROMISE

IT WAS when Dencey was walking down the road behind Silas and his cows that the heart of her trouble came clear.

Jetsam. That was it. She had been hiding it even from herself. *She could not keep her promise to Jetsam.* It was last April that Jetsam had gone away to sea. And Dencey had promised that she would wait for him to come back.

No, she had not promised. She hadn't said a word, but it was just the same, just the same. He had met her out here on the Common that last day, that last moment before he sailed. He had caught her in his arms. Oh, so that it was like a thunderclap even to remember it. He had kissed her not just once—three times—a confusion of tenderness, nearness, and unexplainable joy. He had said:

"Dencey, thee'll wait for me, won't thee? I haven't got anybody to wait for me but thee."

Of course she hadn't answered him. How could she speak when he was kissing her—when she was so astonished — so, yes — happy? She hadn't dreamed of letting him kiss her. Never! But when he did the kiss was hers too—hers just as much as his. And with it was a strange protecting power, as if she were keeping him from all harm anytime—anywhere.

And now if she went away like this, from Nantucket—what would he think when he came back? He would be gone four years. Four interminable years. And she far in the Western wilderness. What would he think when he came back?

Suddenly someone was shaking her.

"Dencey, Dencey, does thee feel so bad? I've been crying too—and trying to find thee."

It was Hopestill Folger, her dearest, most special friend.

"I don't want thee to go, Dencey. Can't thee stay back and live with us?"

Hopestill held her hand.

"Thee knows I can't. I must be with Father and Mother."

"But it's dreadful. Ed says thee will travel weeks and weeks through just woods, and there are wolves and bears and terrible, terrible Indians."

"It isn't that," said Dionis. "I'd like the traveling. It's—it's something else."

It seemed as though she must tell Hopestill. She had never told her about Jetsam. She had never told anybody. She could not. But perhaps Hopestill could help her.

"What else?" demanded Hopestill. For Dionis had hesitated and fallen silent.

"It's—it's—oh, it's about Jetsam. I promised to—well, to wait till he comes home. And now when he comes he—I won't be here. I could write to him." (The letter would be given to a whaling captain and directed to the "Ship *Sextant,* South Pacific. Anywhere.") "But thee knows how most of the letters come home and lie in Rotches Warehouse. And—and—" she turned squarely to Hopestill—"thee'll tell him, won't thee, when he comes back? Thee must tell him where I am—and that I am waiting. Won't thee, Hopestill?"

Hopestill was staring at her, amazed.

"Is thee betrothed to Sam Jetsam?" she demanded.

"No, oh, no. Of course not."

"Thee acts like it."

"No, I'm not. Why, I'm only fifteen, and he——" Dionis went crimson. All the memory of that kiss sprang into her face.

"Dionis Coffyn, I'll warrant he kissed thee."

"No," breathed Dencey, her face hidden. But Quaker truth-telling was inbred. "Well, what if he did? It was just for good-bye. But I didn't promise him. Not *anything!*"

"I should think thee wouldn't promise him! Why, thee could have any boy in the Coffin School —that is, except Ed Dewsbury." Hopestill gave a tribute blush to her especial swain.

"I don't want any of them," asserted Dencey.

"Well, surely thee doesn't want Sam Jetsam. He isn't one bit good-looking, and—why, he's nothing but a wharf rat—a son of Injun Jill."

Dencey flared with angry defense.

"He *is* good-looking, too. He has got beautiful eyes when—when thee looks right into them. And he isn't Injun Jill's son. Even Father only half believes that. And Mother said he was *saintly* to go out and live with Injun Jill again when he could stay with us."

Dionis spoke between sobs. Hopestill was completely dumbfounded.

"Why, thee's *in love* with Sam Jetsam. Thee never told me a word of it. And thee let him kiss thee—why——"

"I'm not in love. I'm not," cried Dencey, terror-stricken at having this delicate thing dragged out

into the light of day. "And I'm not betrothed. I did not promise him one thing—not a single word!"

She pulled away from Hopestill and ran blindly down Pleasant Street toward home.

CHAPTER IV

THE UPROOTING

OH, THE busy, busy weeks getting ready for the sloop that was to take them to New London; the heartbreaking good-byes that were all unspoken while the women consulted together as to what could be taken and what left behind.

"I'm going to give thee my best set of green sprayed dishes," said Lydia's sister Judith. "Thee's always loved them, and Rufus can bring me another set from China next voyage."

Lydia protested, but yielded at last, knowing the yearning love that was trying to reach out with that gift across the Western track, across the silence of their separation.

Long consultations as to whether one had best

take the carved bedstead or the white mahogany desk. The desk "had it," because such tiny precious things could be packed within the drawers. There was the sea chest packed with clothing, the blanket chest filled with blankets, real Nantucket wool, which Lydia's mother had woven.

Also there were long quarrels with Peggy, who said impudent things about Tom Coffyn being a fool to go and yet was determined to go with them whether there was room in the wagon or not.

Tom *was* a fool. How well he knew it! He dared not for his life tell why he was going: to study the life of plants. Why should he care for flowers or trees? Why should a man leave whaling for so effeminate a thing?—and he in good health, too! No wonder Tom kept his Linnæus *Philosophia Botanica* locked in the left-hand drawer of his secretary. No wonder he now buried it in the blanket chest where no one would see.

Still less could he tell his neighbors of Robert Owen's Social Community, where all the sacred traditions were to be flouted. Where even the children in the schools were to be taught the new geology science which said the world was not made in six days. As to the experiments in Common Property, the intense wordy pamphlets of Robert Owen: "How to Well House, Well Feed, Well Clothe the Workingman," Tom Coffyn himself could not un-

derstand these. Were not all families in Nantucket well enough fed and clothed? Did not each person do some work, creative and interesting, which bred independence in them but which yet fed the life of the whole Nantucket community? All—all bending toward the building and outfitting of the Whaling Fleet? A whole island livingly devoted to one adventurous enterprise. Tom had been so accustomed to this homogeneous vital community that he could not realize how bitterly Robert Owen's England lacked it.

But the group of scholars in Harmony, the freedom to study, the new learning, the new science so frowned upon in God-fearing New England—that Tom Coffyn did understand and did long for.

He watched Lydia about her incessant task of getting ready. There was a treadmill steadiness about that task, a treadmill look in her face that worried him.

"Is thee quite sure thee doesn't repent our going? Even yet I can change."

She turned to him with Quaker amazement.

"But we decided," she said. Then her worn face blossomed with that look which only Tom Coffyn ever saw. "It is the price of being with thee. Nothing is too great for that."

Even Tom did not guess how prisoned was Lydia's nature except in its one expressiveness to-

ward him. He supposed all good wives were like that.

As for Dionis, her own problem absorbed her quite. After her unfortunate confession to Hope-still she felt her secret sealed with seven seals. She could tell no one about Jetsam or that she must wait for him. She must go with that burden on her soul. Young folk make confidants of their elders until the moment when confidence is most important. Then they will not or cannot tell. Not Father, though he was her dear intimate, for he did not like Jetsam. Not Mother, between whom and herself was a wall of separation. Not even Aunt Lovesta, for had she not once called Jetsam ill born?

Home love and adventure love were at war in Dencey's soul. New York, Philadelphia, mountains—she would see mountains and the wonders of the West. When she lay in her bed at night these floated before her. They became part of her possessions. Had anything intervened to stop their going, Dionis would have been bitterly disappointed.

Yet and yet—home love and Island love held her and would not let her go. The partings—how fatal they seemed to her—how final!

There was Aunt Lovesta. That was the worst of all. Aunt Lovesta was the mother of her spirit.

Always she had understood Dencey, and Dencey had understood her. Now Dencey would sit by her in the evening secretly touching the soft gray dress. That touch which would be so soon severed.

And then, unexpectedly, Grandfather.

Grandfather had never been her friend. He was like a dry stalk. Just brown old Grandfather who had rheumatism and was cross, who whipped her when she needed it, who had always on First Days had her into his room and taught her fearful doctrines about Hell and the Hereafter and the unforgivable sin. One could never forget that he was Congregationalist. Mother had tried to correct the false doctrine, but it had left its scar.

Dionis was passing his room one day when he called her in. She entered reluctantly.

"Dionis," he said, "you are going now into the world. I want to warn you. You will meet wickedness in many forms. I have no doubt that at times you will succumb, for you have never given your heart to the Lord."

Oh, dear, oh, dear, how tiresome he was! When would he have done? She'd heard it all so many times. But suddenly he was talking of something worse. Gracious! Of his own death and his will.

"I willed you a certain thing, Dionis. I never expected to part with it in my lifetime. But with

you so far off my wishes might not be carried out."

He reached into his secretary and touched a spring. A secret drawer flew open, and he took out an ivory miniature. He forgot Dencey for a moment. Then he handed it to her.

An exquisite thing! The loveliest Dencey had ever touched or seen. Such minute, perfect delineation; such color, and the brown eyes actually gazing at her. The dress was yellow and cut astonishingly low.

"I had that made in Paris," said Grandfather. "Yes, Mitty went with me on that first voyage after our marriage. We landed at Havre." He chuckled. "I made it convenient to do so. I had this picture in my mind all the while. You're nothing like as pretty as she, Dionis. But you're the only one that has an atom of her looks."

"But—but it isn't for me!" she exclaimed. It had swept her into strange regions, as beauty always did.

"Yes, it is." He turned his back. "I'd rather all the others had gone away but you," he said gruffly.

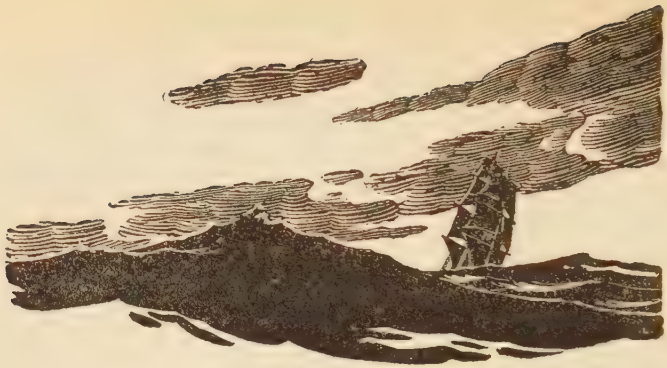
What was he doing? Oh, could it be that Grandfather was weeping? How dreadful—how dreadful!

Dionis stood quite still, trying to speak to him—trying to break down that wall of coldness that had been between them since before memory began.

She touched his arm. She would never see him again. He was so old. And he was failing too.

"Grandfather. Dear Grandfather!" she said.

Suddenly her throat closed and she could not speak at all.



CHAPTER V

A GIFT FROM INJUN JILL

SUCH were the strange experiences of Dencey's days. But back of them all, imbuing them all, was her promise to Jetsam, dogging her like a remorse, as if it were her own fault she was going away. Always some new phase of it popping into her mind. A shadow always there.

The broken promise. The broken promise. The broken promise.

At first slowly and then by leaps and bounds the day of departure drew near. The house dismantled, things given away, packed up, Jane taking the children to the new home, the big dining table gone to Uncle Caleb's, not even spoons and forks enough to eat with. Confusion, excitement.

Lydia was kneeling by a chest of clothes, putting in Sally's little things. Steven came in.

"Aunt Lydia, can't I do something to help thee?" he asked.

"Yes. There's the food supplies for Indian Jill. I bought them with Jetsam's lay, but I really have not time to take them out to her cottage. Thee knows I take them every week."

Stephen began to pick up the packages. Suddenly Dencey said:

"Can I go with thee?"

She did not know she was going to say it. But in that moment she remembered that she had never seen the room where Jetsam had spent his pitiful childhood and to which he had returned to help Injun Jill—that task which was so difficult for him to do.

"All right," said Steve. "Come along."

Near Lydia was a sailor basket filled with things to throw away, a strand of large crimson beads brought home from the South Sea Islands as a curiosity, a yellow sarong. Of course nobody wanted them. As Dencey ran out she snatched these up for a present to Injun Jill. Such gorgeous things. A pity to throw them away.

Soon she and Stephen were jolting along the rut road in a cart. What a lovely day! A dry northeaster. The clearest of all Nantucket weather.

Every little cottage, every sheep on distant hill stood out clear-cut in the clearness. And the sea, a hard straight pavement of sapphire. Dencey expected to feel tender toward all this—that pulling feeling half pain and all love. But she did not. She felt nothing, sitting silent by Stephen as they jolted along.

They came to Jill's cottage. There was the sedgy pond, a blue jewel amid the goldening September grass. The sagging cot beside it. Now they were in the miserable room. Jetsam's home, dark, low raftered, with cobwebs hanging from the rafters. Jill sat by the fireless hearth, the human expression of the room's loneliness. She grunted as they entered and got slowly to her feet. But her old eyes gleamed as she saw the bundles. Gracious! How old she was. She might belong to the Egypt that Father told about, or the dead moon.

"Ye pring goot dings. Ye gif em to Jill."

It was Jill's form of thanks.

"Oh, no," said Stephen. "Thee knows we don't give these things. They're what Jetsam sends thee. Doesn't thee remember, Jetsam left his lay for thee?"

"Jetsam," she repeated cloudily. "He *my* poy."

"Yes, we've heard that before," said Stephen. And Dencey thought with sudden gladness, "He doesn't believe that, Stephen doesn't."

"I'm going to bring these every week," said Stephen, "because Lydia Coffyn is going away. Thee's heard that, has thee?"

Jill turned sharply to Dencey.

"Ye goin' away too?" she demanded.

"Yes," Dencey answered.

"Stay avay alvays—all—mooder, fader too?"

"Yes."

"Goot. Goot. Stay alvays. Jetsam come back to me, me!" She tapped her chest hard with her bony finger. "Not go Coffyn's no more."

The horrid old thing! But Dencey could not be angry with her. A quiet was upon Dencey—the strangeness of going away—the strangeness now of looking on this room where Jetsam's babyhood had suffered. Jetsam had told her of the beatings Jill had given him, the beatings of Bill the man who had lived there with Jill. Had not Dencey seen that abuse, the almost physical twisting of the little boy she had met so long ago? How he had changed—Jetsam! So tall now. Something so fine and upstanding about him.

Her face flushed slowly as she looked about the room. Jetsam had kept it neat, but Jill had completely untidied it. The only neat thing was Jetsam's bed, which was left untouched. Just the mattress on the floor and an old blanket Mother had given him—a blanket of Dencey's own weaving,

full of knots and puckerings. She wove much better now. Her eyes lighted on an old sea chest in the corner. Gracious! It was marked in clear letters—

Ezra Green. Ship British Queen. London.

The very ship that had gone aground so long ago on the South Shore. The very shipwreck Jetsam was supposed to be taken from. Oh, if she only knew the secret which that old chest remembered. The creaking, tossing ship. Jetsam's own people running wildly to the deck. And that Bill who claimed to be his father. Horrible.

"What ye doin', Dence Coffyn? Noding in dat chest for ye. Jeel got noding."

It was Jill's high scared voice. Jill backed off until she stood in front of the chest. Her fright awoke Dencey's pity. The poor creature had always been bullied by all the small boys in town.

"Why, Jill, I won't take anything. I don't want anything of yours."

Suddenly Dencey remembered the gifts in her reticule. "Look, I brought thee these beads," she said, displaying them.

What a change! Fright gave place to wonder in the old fate-carved face. Then delight leaped in the eyes. Jill grasped the beads, held them up to the light, then looked at the other hand, which held

the yellow scarf. She began to make jerky, angular gestures.

Who can tell what ancient hereditary dances awoke in her, forgotten yet in her blood: strange ceremonies of devil exorcism and hither-drawing of the Great Spirit—forays of painted warriors in the woods?

She did not say a word. She forgot Dencey entirely.

"Come along, let's go," said Stephen, laughing. "I guess the old goose likes those better than the bread."

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It was the day, the hour. The cart stood at the door, loaded with all their things. The family gathered in the front hall and outside steps to say goodbye. They did not talk much. There was nothing more to say. Just "Lydia, has thee got thy gloves?" or "Remember this box is apples for thy lunch." Only Ariel was acting naturally—playing on the walk with the top Aunt Judith had given him. It was terribly like a funeral. Even the cart.

Peggy said, "Let me hold the baby. I won't hold her no more. That's certain. If she comes back at all it'll be a woman grown—or maybe a old, old woman." She held the little one close and then began to sob as softly as ever she could. At that Dencey noticed that two great tears rolled down

Aunt Lovesta's unmoved face, and Mother's hands, tying the box of apples, trembled so that they could tie no more.

All of a sudden Dencey could not stand it. Her throat seemed thick and suffocating. She turned and ran back to the kitchen for a drink of water. The kitchen was empty and deserted. How dreadful it looked! Like a strange place already.

Someone was standing at the back door. Why, it was Injun Jill! She was nodding her head in a kind of crazy triumph. Beckoning with her gnarled hand. Heavens! She had the yellow scarf twisted about her head, the crimson beads on her withered neck.

"What does thee want?" said Dencey loudly. "Thee go away."

But Jill did not go away. Instead she came into the kitchen. It was evident she was drunk—not drunk enough to be belligerent, only determined and without caution.

"Aha, Dence Coffyn go avay! Jeshum coom back to Injion Jeel. My poy."

"Go away!" cried Dencey angrily. If she began to laugh she knew she couldn't ever stop.

Jill gave her an unexpected push and thrust a dirty bundle into Dencey's arms. Dencey backed away, but Jill caught her arm and folded it tight across the bundle.

"Take it, take it," she commanded. "Ye gif me presenth, I gif *ye* presenth. Good presenth. Injion Jeel gif good presenth."

"Dencey, Dencey," came the loud call through the house, "thee's keeping everybody waiting. The cart is gone. Hurry, can't thee?"

And not knowing what she did, still clutching the bundle, Dencey ran out the dear front door.

Strange, strange and unearthly this whole experience. The men cousins and uncles waving goodbye at the dock. Stephen! She'd forgotten she would never see Stephen again. The passing of Brant Point Light, with the shipyards on the shore. The ships on the ways and the busy tiny men. The fluty tinkle of ship mallets sounding over the water, fainter, fainter, fainter.

Now they were passing the Nantucket bar.

The ship began to rise and fall on the great swells. The great gray sail taut in the wind reaching up with its mast to the very sky. The trilling silence of a sailing ship going forward on her journey.

And now the Island, over there to the southeast. No longer sandy yellow or green with grass, but blue and unreal, sinking, sinking below the horizon. Soon it would be hull-under. Her Nantucket!

Suddenly Father's hand slipped over hers and held it. He did not say anything. He only stood so beside her, warm and kind for a long while. At last he said:

"They are eating dinner now. Thee had better come."

And only then was Dencey aware of Jill's bundle clutched under her arm. She stuffed it into her carpet bag and went to join her mother and the children on the deck.

CHAPTER VI

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO NEW LONDON

THEY landed the afternoon of the second day at New London. It is no small thing to see for the first time a city not your own. Lydia had been twice to the Cape to preach; Tom had touched at most of the countries of the globe, but this was Dencey's first unfamiliar place. A grown girl now, with mind keened and aired out from all childish vagueness, she seized hungrily upon the new scene.

They had got their belongings into a cart and were themselves finding a way along dusty lanes between huge crowded warehouses. Now before them opened the street of the town. Dencey's face took on such an expression of absorbed wonder that her father burst out laughing.

"Well, Dionis," he said, "now thee is in the world. How does thee like it?"

"Father, just think when I look up that street I don't even know what is around the turn. It—it might be anything."

"Anything from a palace to a baboon," laughed Tom. "Well," he added, "the baboon isn't so far astray. When New London was in the West India trade almost any tropical wonder might be seen in the streets."

"Oh," breathed Dencey, "I wish it was that way now!"

"I don't," said her father. "West India trade wasn't good for the town, though it made it very rich. The tropic liquors, gin and worse, flowed here like water."

"Where did it flow?" asked Ariel. "Was it a stream? Was it in the gutter?"

"No, my own, it flowed down men's throats. And some of them went to the gutters. But it's all different now."

No need to tell these Nantucket children that New London was now at the business of whaling. The familiar sights were all about them. On the docks—on the street everywhere were piled story high the barrels and barrels of whale oil. On top of the endless piles was a covering of seaweed, and even now men were climbing up with buckets of

sea water to sluice them. The presence of the whale was everywhere: in the insistent smell of oil, so familiar to Lydia and the children that it was not even noted, in the tap-tap of the coopers, making more barrels. Now they passed a blacksmith's, where Ariel (as every child will) paused to see the fiery quivering glow of the forge and to hear the ring of the anvil. The blacksmith was finishing a harpoon.

The noise awoke Sally, who began to cry.

"Here, let me take her," said Tom. "We'll soon be out of the noise."

And, sure enough, a short walk brought them to the gracious white houses, broad streets, and young planted trees.

"And I don't even know who lives in the houses," rejoiced Dencey. "How wonderful not to know a face that I pass."

Suddenly there was a cry up the quiet street:

"Ship in sight! Rounding Fisher's Island!"

"Who is it?"

"What signal?"

Doors flew open, small boys darted out and went scattering down the street, all calling the news to each other. Men with excited faces all streamed in one direction. Women too, ladies and little girls. A thing unknown to Nantucket, where the wife stayed at home and waited.

Now the church bell clanged. Two church bells, filling the air with the buzz of dissonant vibrations. Tom stopped a hurrying New Londoner.

"What is she?" he asked.

"Must be the *Leonidas*. Thank God! Long overdue. Yes, the blue signal flying from Brown and Wainright's. It's the *Leonidas*, sure." And he ran faster to make up time.

They had come to Mrs. Huggins's, the widow who was selling them the wagon. She met them at the door, a thin bereft little figure clothed in black. Even this looked foreign to Dencey. Quakers were not allowed to mourn with clothes.

Mrs. Huggins took Sally in her arms.

"What a tiny baby to go 'way out West," she said. "Come in, all of you, out of the clamor. It must be the *Leonidas*."

She spoke wearily. Her ship had come in for the last time. They entered a large room, set perfectly, with all in order.

Tom started to put on his hat again. No whaling captain could stay quietly at home with a ship arriving from the Seven Seas. Dencey caught his hand.

"Father," she whispered, "let me go to the dock. Father, I've never seen a ship come in—not right at the dock."

He hesitated. But it was always hard for Tom to

refuse Dencey anything. In a few moments they were hurrying down the street, Tom almost as excited as Dencey herself. With every block toward the dock the crowd thickened. At the dock itself a dense crowd, black as a swarm of ants. The two had to press and push to get in. Tom helped Dencey to climb a pile of slippery barrels. At last they saw.

Slowly, magnificently she came. A full-rigged ship, making the best of herself with all sails set, flying the blue pennant of her company and above that the stars and stripes. Slowly, solemnly, like a tired bird she drew up to the dock, folded her great wings at last, her masts towering above the dock. And now the eager sunburned faces aboard, the stern, clean-cut captain, the younger mate dressed to the nines, even the rough sailors in their best peering down from the deck.

Then great excitement. Human life pouring out from the ship and mingling with the life ashore. A strange wave of sound. Greetings: low, shaken laughter; husband clasping wife or lifting his little boy in his arms. And there close below Dencey's perch a wild heartbroken cry:

"Where is he? Oh, didn't he come back? Oh, my George, my husband! He must come back."

And the rough sailor who had the sad news to tell put his arm about the wild, agonized woman.

All her life Dencey was to remember that sharp cry and that insistent questioning. They never all returned, the crew that went out in a whaler.

Then it was over, and Father lifted her down from the barrels. It was Dencey's last sight of those winged wanderers of the world.

When they came back to the house, Mrs. Huggins said, "Well, I s'pose, first of all, you want to see the wagon."

She led them out into a shed where all resplendent the wagon stood. It was painted, as all such wagons invariably were, with a blue body and a streak of red above. On the side it had the picture of a prancing horse. Dencey's thrill at the sight ran tingling up her back. All the wonder of their far faring spoke from it.

"Why, it's like a boat," she exclaimed. For the wagon body curved upward each end like prow and stern.

"Yes," said Father, "a Pinkey model, but I can't name her rig."

"Her rig" was white canvas stretched over arched wooden hoops, a fine protection, especially as it could be drawn to in circular purse fashion front and back. In front was the driver's seat, facing forward, and two little niches either side of it facing inward.

"For Ariel and Sally," said Tom gayly, lifting

Ariel into the wagon, where the bliss of climbing into the clean, paint-smelling nook dispelled all homesickness in that little boy.

"It will be some time before Sally is old enough to sit there," objected Lydia. "I hope we'll reach our destination before then."

"But I'll sit there," said Dencey. And she climbed nimbly up the wheel and into the vacant seat, from which she waved merry messages to the entranced Ariel.

There in the white shadow of the canvas it was like a cosy house. Along either side of the wagon ran long chests with lids, for packing dishes, etc. The owner had expended all his Yankee inventiveness.

"We'll have to take one of those chests out to make room for our desk and other things," said Lydia, brightening with interest.

"Where are the horses?" asked Tom.

Mrs. Huggins led them to the stable where stood the splendid big horses, one white and one bay.

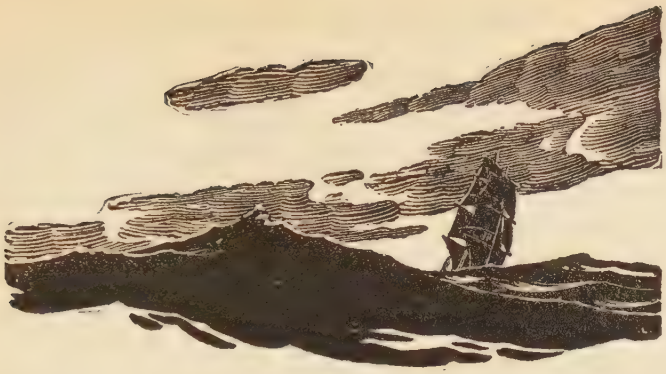
"Good old fellows," said Tom. "So willing to take us on our long, rough way."

How well they were to know these two patient companions before they reached their journey's end.

"Mr. Huggins, he loved them," said Mrs. Huggins sadly. "He was all for goin' West. I didn't

want to go. An' I used to tell him so. But now I'd go anywhere with him if he was only here."

Lydia touched her shoulder kindly. Thankfulness rose in Lydia like a fountain of living water—that she had her Tom to go with. What difference did it make where she was going? What was the loss of Nantucket when she had Tom?



CHAPTER VII

THE MYSTERIOUS BUNDLE

THEY walked back to the house and to their own rooms. Here Lydia opened Dencey's carpet bag for Ariel's nightgown. The child was wearied out.

"Dionis," she called. "What—why, what in the world is this?"

She held up Jill's dirty bundle.

"That," said Dencey. "I forgot that. I meant to throw it away. Injun Jill gave that to me—just forced it upon me. She——"

"Indian Jill! How could she?"

"She was in the kitchen. Yes, she was. When I went back for a glass of water. She was drunk and made me take 'em; and Stephen called." How far away the scene seemed now.

Lydia was opening the bundle swiftly; then with sudden carefulness. Now she gathered the whole thing in her dress and hurried to the window.

"Dionis, come here!" An intensity of voice that brought Dencey quickly.

"Baby clothes!" she exclaimed. "Oh, I didn't suppose baby clothes could be so filthy. Mother, throw them into the fire, quick."

But Lydia put a protecting hand over the soiled things.

"What is it?" said Dencey. Then, catching her mother's wonder: "What could Injun Jill be doing with baby clothes?"

"That's just it," said Lydia. "And such baby clothes. They could never have belonged to Indian Jill. She never could have made them."

She held up to the light a little dress. It might have belonged to a child a year old. The torn skirt was of cobweb texture. Lydia, the weaver, knew the wonder of that warp and woof.

"It was never made in this country," she said. "It looks like English nainsook. And the lace on the edge. I believe that is called rose point. Thy grandmother Coffyn had some like that. I always kept it in lavender for Grandfather. He said it was as valuable as a China silk shawl."

Dencey's eyes had their black lake expression of amazement.

"Why, Mother, they might be——" She stopped for breath.

"Yes, child. They might be Jetsam's clothes, and if they are they prove beyond a doubt that he does not belong to Indian Jill, nor to that wretched Bill, her so-called husband."

Dencey picked up a tiny wool jacket.

"But, look, Mother. This couldn't be for the same child. It's too little, and stiff as a board. Oh——" Romance and detective instinct were awake in Dencey now. "Mother, that time I went swimming I wore some wool stockings and they got little and stiff like this from being in salt water. Maybe this was in the wreck—the wreck of the *British Queen.*"

There were two more articles: a tiny knotted pillow and a coarse towel which had been wrapped around all.

Dencey held the pillow to the fading light and discovered some shreds of embroidery upon it.

"Look," said her tense voice. "It's letters. Here is a big O—and A M and E and L."

Lydia took it from her with unusual haste.

"That fragment looks like a capital S. Does thee think it could be?"

"Our Samuel!"

The words once pronounced came plain from the worn surface.

"It is—it is!" cried Dencey. "Mother, it is Jet-

sam's name. I always knew he wasn't Injun Jill's. I don't see why I am so—so surprised."

"No," said Lydia. "I am not really surprised. But this is not a real proof. Jetsam's own fine nature is more proof than any flimsy garments."

How loyal to Jetsam Mother was. Dencey had had no idea how loyal until now. Her praise called up into Dencey's mind Jetsam—a vivid lighted picture, and how he had looked that moment when he was going to kiss her.

Then a swift change in her mind:

"But, Mother, Jetsam should have these things himself. I should not have brought them away."

"No, child, thee should not have brought them from Nantucket," agreed Lydia.

"But Jill gave them to me so quick, and at the last, last moment. I didn't look."

"Let it be a lesson to thee," said Lydia with some severity. "A lesson in carefulness."

But Dencey was not interested in the lesson—only in its remedy.

"We must send them back. How can we send them back?" she queried. "Oh, I wish I hadn't brought them!"

Lydia thought they might send them by the first ship to Lovesta, who could keep them until Jetsam's return.

Tom came in. He was not so impressed as was his wife with the mystery of the clothes.

"Someone gave them to Jill," he said.

"They are not Nantucket weave," declared Lydia.

"Nor is the towel," said Tom looking disgustedly at the soiled linen. "That's the kind of towel the rough sailors use."

"Then it's off the *British Queen,"* put in Dencey. "They always said Jetsam was saved from the *British Queen.* And Jill's got an old chest from that wreck."

"If they came from the wreck, why would anybody save a pillow? They may have nothing to do with Sam Jetsam at all."

Evidently Tom was not interested in the young man. Also, evidently, he was glad to have him once and for all out of their lives. Dencey saw this as plainly as she saw her mother's liking for Jetsam.

Next morning Lydia washed the tiny garments with such care that not one hole or tear went farther. They came out dainty, exquisite—the loveliest baby garments she had ever seen. She inquired about ships to Nantucket. Dencey too inquired anxiously of all new-made friends. Nobody was going to Nantucket. She asked Mrs. Huggins if she would keep the bundle and watch for some way to send it. But Mrs. Huggins was soon to make a long visit to New York.

Meanwhile the morning came when the wagon was packed and ready and they were to start.

"Dionis," said Lydia giving her the neatly wrapped bundle, "thee will have to take this with thee. We must keep it safe. We cannot leave it in casual hands."

To her astonishment Dencey burst into tears.

"I can't take it, Mother." She pushed the bundle from her. "I am doing enough harm to him already. I can't take away his one proof. It's Jetsam's. It's not mine."

"Why, what is the matter? It *is* thine—thy responsibility since thee brought it away."

"I don't want it," sobbed Dencey. "I don't want to take it 'way out to Indiana."

"That makes no difference." Lydia was much mystified at her daughter's behavior. "It is thy care till thee can send it home. Thee can write a full description to Aunt Lovesta. Perhaps we can send it by someone from Philadelphia. But, Dionis, what does thee mean, that thee is doing harm to Jetsam?"

But to this query Dencey would answer not at all.

CHAPTER VIII

A GOLDEN DAY

THE covered wagon stood at the gate. It was full to overflowing. Especially it overflowed with feather beds—fat, pudgy, tied up with ropes and bulging out of these bonds into everybody's way. Within, strapped to the wall in plain sight, were ax and gun, these so much more important than tickets for this sort of journeying.

In the bright September sunshine they stood about the wagon, excited, breathless, glad. Even Lydia felt young this morning. A number of New Londoners gathered to see them off. A covered wagon starting for the West was not so common but that it made a little stir among the neighbors. But these were only stranger-neighbors, no sorrow in these good-byes. Stranger faces from now on were to be

the portion of this little family. And even among these farewells one man had come only to say good-bye to the horses. He was a farmer living up the Thames, and he had raised the horses himself.

"Yes, sir," he repeated for the third time, "I raised 'em and I sold 'em to Dan Huggins. I named 'em too. Peacock, the off mare there, and Turkey. Kind o' pioneer-like names. They allus seemed to me like they'd be fur long journeys. Why, them horses can pull through anything."

"I'm sure they can if I treat them right," said Tom dubiously. "A ship obeys a man so much better than a horse."

"Not ef ye know the horse," asserted the farmer. "All ye got to do is to know yer horse like a person, and there ye are."

"Well, I know to pull the reins to port or starboard," laughed Tom, helping Lydia into the end of the wagon, "and to reef 'em if they get scared."

"Now, that ain't it at all." The farmer shook his head. "Peacock, there. Ye can pull her in. But Turkey is different. an' he's the leader, I'll tell ye that. If he gets scairt ye hev to sing to him."

"Sing to him!" repeated Tom, so amazed that he held Sally and forgot to hand her to her mother.

"Yes, sir, sing! 'Old Hundred' is what Turkey knows best."

"But," said Dencey, wide-eyed, "we don't know

'Old Hundred.' We're Friends. We don't sing at all."

"I reckon ye'll sing if Turkey gits to runnin'." The man slapped his knee.

"How does 'Old Hundred' go?" questioned Dencey.

"Nonsense," said Tom, sure now that the man was making game of him for being a seaman. He lifted Sally to her mother.

"I want to get in," clamored Ariel, dancing on both feet at once. "I want to get in first."

"Never mind, Son. All in good time." He swung the boy aboard with a great sweep, where he clambered joyously over feather beds, baskets, chests, to his own niche seat in the front.

Tom began to shake hands all around. Dencey shyly followed him. Lydia leaned from the tent flap to thank Mrs. Huggins once more, and a neighbor climbed up breathless to give Lydia a hot custard pie.

"I was so afraid it wouldn't get done. I wanted it to be fresh."

"And here's a pot of beans," said another. "My beans will go West even if I don't."

Dencey climbed in, and Tom to his high driver's seat. He flapped the reins with unskillful hands.

"Good-bye," called the little group. "Good-bye, and God bless you."

The horses started. They were off.

New life leaving the old. Deeply, strangely significant. The home-keeping folk felt the hidden thrill of it as they turned back to their houses, a vague unrest and frustration like wings that folded down again. But the travelers—theirs was the freedom. They had dropped their years. All was at the beginning, so that it seemed youth too was beginning over again. They were going—going. Every hour was new.

Surely Dencey felt the profound, the skyey change. Life for her had been in the square, neat Quaker rooms, along narrow streets, the well-known school, a round of duties always repeated. Now, suddenly, she was in this golden day—a day of open sunshine, the jogging steps of the horses, the squeak of new harness, the tinkle of things in the moving wagon, the white glow of canvas over her head with the shadow of trees forever passing backward over it. No duties at all. Routine left so far behind that it was difficult even to remember it. When had Mother ever sat all day with nothing to do? Oh, a golden paradise of a day. She forgot Jetsam and her broken promise. Forgot even Jill's fateful bundle hidden away in the chest. Happy hours are always the longest. They are crowded with change. This day was an era.

"Father," she called, "I can't see things here inside. Can't I sit by thee?"

"Why, Dionis," said Lydia, "thee can see a mile there back on the road."

But Dionis was not looking backward. She climbed over everything to her father's high seat. Ah, that was what she wanted! The onward road with its conscious look of going forward, of beckoning them out into the unknown. Great wagons met them, laden high with corn, squash, yellow pumpkins. They passed, going toward New London. Dencey felt vaguely sorry for them and their direction—for the folk who were still at daily tasks. At a turn they came upon a grove of autumn maples, large and full leafed. Silence and golden grandeur was theirs. They seemed aflame with gold, touched with light from another world.

"Father," said Dencey, "I didn't know trees could be so large and straight up. They are giants, real giants." Dencey had known only the tiny twisted trees of Nantucket.

"These are nothing to what we are to see farther on. Those will be the giants. I'm glad thee likes them and isn't like Silas."

Even Lydia laughed, back there in the wagon, for everyone knew the story of Silas, the town shepherd, who went once to the Cape. "How did thee

like the Main?" he was asked. "Couldn't see it. It was all messed up with trees," said that dweller of the open moors.

Ariel knelt upright in his small niche, looking forward over the back of the seat.

"If I meet a giant," he mused, "I'll take down Father's gun an' shoot *bang bang!"* (He performed the pantomime.) "Then giants run away. An' when I meet a Indian I shoot *bang bang.* Indian got feathers—red feathers and blue feathers, like a bird. Kanah said so. He knows."

Kanah was his cousin back in Nantucket and Ariel's idol.

"Indian got feathers. They fly—fly up over the wagon."

"Son, thee must not touch my gun," Tom admonished. But there was no need. Gun, flying Indian, and all were but the figments of a dream.

Noon came. They neared the village of Lynne.

"We could go to a tavern," said Tom, "but we won't. We may as well get used to camping. For that is what we have got to do later on."

He stopped, and they all climbed out into the glowing woodland, walking stiff and a little lame over the hushed leaves. How fragrant the place, smelling of goldenrod and earthy leaves. How infinitely fresh. How different from Nantucket and altogether magic.

Tom unhitched the horses and watered them at one of the clean little streams of New England.

"Don't thee get the dinner," he called to Lydia. "Dencey and I will do it. Thee has been working all these weeks."

He spread the blanket for her. How strange to see the dignified Lydia sitting on the ground. Then he cut two forked sticks and a crosspiece. In a few hungry minutes the camp fire was burning and the kettle beginning to boil. Dencey made the tea while her father fetched things from the wagon. Now Tom handed Lydia the steaming cup and kissed her.

"Hey, gypsy wife!" he called her.

Lydia, the sedate Lydia a gypsy. Of all things!

But Dencey did not laugh. Suddenly she knew that these two also were living in the same golden world that all day had been hers. Inhabitants of that same magic. She saw them for the first time not as mere Father and Mother, but as individuals in their own right—Lydia and Tom Coffyn. Why, perhaps he had kissed her long ago, not calmly as now, but as Jetsam kissed—with that delight and life. Perhaps . . .

Dencey blushed slowly and began to mend the fire. It seemed she had never loved them before. Not really as now.

There on a pile of blankets lay little Sally, two

months old. Even she was part of this day's goldenness. She was on her back just as Lydia had placed her, but her violet-blue eyes no longer gazed with infant infinity. She was *seeing*. Seeing a direct beam of sun that slanted down from the branches, and the fire smoke floating, floating through it in heavy radiance. Sally was for the first time attentive to this world, come to her new abode. This moment arrived, from what far distances who can guess.

Something of this Dionis felt with a pang of pity. She went over and kissed Sally.

A rabbit dashed across their clearing. Immediately Ariel began to croon about the rabbit: how he would find her in her hole, and all her little ones, and take them for his very own. Yes, into the wagon. But Ariel made no move to do these things.

"Come," said Tom briskly. "We must be going. We must get across the Connecticut River before sundown."

CHAPTER IX

PEACOCK AND TURKEY TO THE FORE

THEY crossed the Connecticut in a barge—wagon, horses, and all—and made Saybrook that night. Next morning early they were on their way.

Tom began to have confidence.

"That New London man was a fool," he said. "Making out that driving was so difficult. It's just a straight-ahead job that any sensible man can perform." Tom's confidence was misplaced, as he was to find out to his sorrow. It was the morning after Saybrook that trouble came. They were driving along a good straight road on the shore of the Sound, not talking, but dreaming a little, as the jogging motion set them to do. Suddenly a covey

of quail shot up from a thicket, a thunder of sound in a cloud.

Turkey snorted and gave a lunge forward. Peacock leaped with him. One instant and the quiet ambling beasts were not. In their place were two creatures of wild flight, strong as bulls and utterly mad with fear. Haunches low, heads flung high, their whole bodies surging in leap after leap.

Tom held them with all his strength and weight, leaning back as far as his driver seat would allow.

"Whoa! Whoa!" he cried.

But Peacock and Turkey were touched by nothing human, rein or voice. They were possessed by fiends. On they dashed up a hill, down the steep farther side. A wild turn. The wagon lurched, then went on bouncing, leaping, groaning. A feather bed broke its moorings and rolled out. Then all the copper pans. This clatter frightened them more. Lydia grasped her two children and held on to whatever she could. Dencey stumbled, fell, and climbed forward toward her father.

"*Sing* to them," she cried in the din. "Sing to Turkey."

Tom disregarded her, or probably heard her not at all.

"Whoa! Whoa!" he shouted, sawing at the reins.

Then Dencey, clinging to the driver seat, began to sing. She didn't know how. She could not turn a

tune, "Old Hundred" or anything else. But she remembered a sounding chanty Jetsam used to sing.

> "O, blow the man down bullies, blow the man down,
> Way-ay, blow the man down,
> O, blow the man down to Liverpool town,
> Give me some time to blow the man down."

Ariel heard and began to sing too. Louder Dencey sang—oh, as loud as she could.

What a surprise! Turkey heard. He pricked his ears and began to slow down. Dencey took heart and began to sing more rhythmically, steady and clear. And the horses responded to that too. Now Tom was in control, and now he was able to stop them.

White and shaken, Lydia and the rest climbed out. Tom tied the horses. They were panting and quivering all over.

"Good Turkey," said Dencey soothingly. "Poor Peacock"; all the time thinking what abominable, silly beasts they were.

"Sing," commanded Tom, holding Turkey's tossing head. "For God's sake, keep singing!"

"Thomas, don't forget thyself," reproved Lydia. "I'm shocked that she should have sung at all."

There beside the wagon they stood with bowed heads while Lydia fervently thanked God for their deliverance. Then they all walked back upon the road, picking up pans, feather bed, the sea-chest,

which had burst open and would have to be mended. It was a long time before they got upon their way again. And then with what caution.

"A ship," said Tom severely, "may be in a heavy sea, a regular hurricane, but she always obeys like a lady. Hang these horses. Look here, Dencey," he added suddenly, "where in the world did thee learn that chanty? It's a vile, vulgar song. None but low sailors sing it."

"Jetsam," faltered Dencey. "Jetsam used to sing it. But, Father, he never sang but that one verse, and that one's all right."

"I'll wager he knew the others," quoth Tom.

"But, Father, if I hadn't sung it——" ventured Dencey. She was thinking, "It was Jetsam saved me. 'Way out on the Pacific he is, yet he saved me. Isn't that queer?"

But her father was talking further: "Dencey, I tell thee right now, Friend or no Friend, thee'll have to learn 'Old Hundred.' It is evidently Turkey's taste in music. And I won't have thee singing 'Blow the man down.' "

"Yes, Father," said Dencey demurely.

That evening in a farmhouse, a severe Congregationalist old lady led Dencey through the mysteries of 'Old Hundred.' A hard time she had of it. For the ear of the unsinging Quaker, knowing no music for generations, was by no means keen.

Truly the new life was leading them into new ways, making them break their bonds.

The way led along the Sound. Sea distances, sea surprises kept Dencey feeling still islanded. It was perfectly natural, thus to go along the margin of the sea. Now the road dipped into a forest, now mounted a hill, or again edged along the smooth beach, the wagon wheels in the tide. Pure New England country with knolls and vales. Forests too, some of them stretching down to the clean beach. Here were not the rocky, forbidding farms of the hill country, but the more gracious ones near river mouths. Low, many-roofed farmhouses sat back from the road, and not one of them refused a welcome.

And the towns! They passed through Guilford, New Haven, Stratford, Fairfield. Terribly isolated these—yes, by slow roads, the snows of winter, and the obdurate remnants of wilderness. But isolated too for good. These were not towns as we know them, hangers-on of cities. But small independent republics where the work of every person was unified in one community aim and all work was creative.

The very houses of these towns had the character of living growth. Strange how like a portrait of themselves these New Englanders made their

houses. These told in every line of gable, window, and gracious doorway the sturdy God-fearing, God-enjoying character of the people. The town centers through which Tom Coffyn's covered wagon took its lumbering way were no blighted ranges of cement and shoppiness. In the midst the Common, with its grateful area of shade, its weedy grass and footpaths crossing it. To one side, like certain hope, the church and high white spire. Across from this the town hall, Greek-pillared; beside it the brown schoolhouse with two doors; the small shop or two which modestly allowed you to buy what you really needed. A human place, grown out of daily life.

Yet these towns, with all their leisure, were not sleepy. Young men in plenty walked the streets, came in and out of the kindly gabled houses, sailed from their docks in the fearless little ships. Men of vigor who looked out from deep-set earnest eyes, had straight, handsome, well-breathing noses and distinctive chins. The American face, different already from any other face on earth.

Towns of men, projectors of purpose, whose impulse reached out across the Seven Seas.

It was this New England life which all unconsciously Tom Coffyn's little family was carrying inland on that westward trending Connecticut road. As surely as the winged seed carries the maple for growth in a new place, so surely were they carry-

ing New England with them. All through the Middle West were springing up New England homes. And in every case that home was feeding the better life of the village in which it was. With books, with education, with interfering in other men's business instead of letting things slide, they relived New England ways. Tom Coffyn's home would be one of these.

Meanwhile, at New Haven he went into one of the elm-shaded homes to call on Professor Silliman. They talked of Robert Owen's Harmony. Silliman, scientist though he was, did not greatly approve of it.

He told Tom of a meteorite which had fallen in Weston, Connecticut, a few years before and which he and his friend Kingsley had described.

"But was it really mineral?" Tom asked, incredulous. "You are sure that what you found had fallen from the air?"

"Yes, perfectly certain; and the surface showed the action of intense heat." Silliman laughed. "President Jefferson says it is easier to believe that two Yankee professors will lie than to believe stones can fall from heaven."

Then both scientists laughed together.

CHAPTER X

A NEW ENGLAND FARM

IT WAS as they were leaving Fairfield that rain began. Gently at first, dulling the brilliance of the autumn woods like a quiet mood. Then harder, in gusts and harder still, a real northeaster. They slept at Norwalk and started next morning in the pouring rain for Stamford. The roads had grown heavy yesterday and now were deep mud. A cold, cheerless lunch was eaten in the wagon.

Wind was blowing and agonizing in the woods. A tree had fallen across the road, and Tom had to get out and chop a passage through. Night was coming on, and found them still pushing their slow way through the rain, with no hope of Stamford for two hours to come. It was cold. Sally began to cry

and cry—the high-pitched confused wailing of the very little one.

"We come awful far," remarked Ariel. "We can't ever find the way back home."

They had no roof to shelter them. Strange and disconcerting that rooflessness to folk that had always known refuge. Ariel began to fret in the close cold wagon. He was determined to pull out all the dishes, and when he broke one and Dencey scolded him he joined Sally's crying and wouldn't leave off. They met a traveler bending double to face the wind.

"How's the road ahead?" questioned Tom.

"Pretty bad," he replied. "Wouldn't be surprised if the crick is up over the road 'long thar by Smith's pasture. It most generally is."

"Tom," called Lydia, "we had better stop at the first good place. The children are worn out."

A little later Tom checked the horses.

"A farmhouse over there," he told Lydia, "but it looks pretty poor."

Lydia peered out of the wet curtain.

"We will go there," she said decisively.

Tom drove into the rutted road, and Dencey climbed out to knock at the door while her father held the horses. The door was opened before her knock—such a pale, spent little woman, her face the picture of surprise at the visitors.

"Can thee take us in for the night?" queried Tom from his high seat. "I'm sorry to ask. We'll be glad to pay."

"I—why I guess so. I couldn't leave anybody out in such a storm."

Lydia was already out of the wagon with Sally.

"But I never took pay in my life for folks a-comin' in this a-way," added the woman, a little hurt.

Tom drove the horses to the barn while the woman led the rest of them back into the kitchen. Such a warm clean place. So dry and protecting, and not a single pan or spoon out of place, or spot upon the floor. In a hooded cradle a child lay asleep; a boy Ariel's age backed off and stared while a thin little girl came forward to help them.

"Take off your wraps. I guess you're soaked through," she said, quite grown up.

"No," said Lydia. "We are only very damp and cold. We are thankful to thee." She turned to the mother. "Won't thee tell us thy name?"

So the introductions were made.

Lydia took off Sally's socks and warmed her feet, at which she began to crow. An optimist was Sally. Ariel sidled up to the boy and offered him a marble. Tom came in with his fine big heartiness, which always put folks in good humor. Mrs. Moore went about the supper draggingly at first; then more cheerful with the interchange of news.

"When I first see ye," she said, "I declare I thought I just couldn't take ye in. I've been so sick this last week. An' this morning I fainted three times. Scart Henry nearly to death. Henry's my son. My husband died a year ago, and then my oldest daughter, Milly, died too."

Soon Henry came in, amazed at the crowded kitchen, seeing Dencey first of all, and seeing hardly anything else, though he looked away and pretended not to. A great youth of sixteen, whose bony wrists stuck out of his sleeves and who never spoke a word if it could be helped. But he moved swiftly, brought in the wood, milked the cows, and fed Tom's horses even before Tom asked for it.

At supper he sat opposite to Dencey and fixed his eyes on his plate. He never looked up save when Dencey was occupied with Ariel. Then he gazed with such a funny look of unbelief in her existence that Dencey had all she could do to keep from giggling. All the while he made the awkward motions of eating. But his mother noticed that his ham and potatoes were not consumed.

"Why, Henry," she exclaimed anxiously, standing behind his chair, for of course she waited on the table, "air ye sick? Ye ain't eaten a thing."

"No, Ma. Course not," Henry answered gruffly, as though he had been caught stealing.

The room was very hot. Suddenly Mrs. Moore

turned slowly around, tried to speak, and then sank to the floor.

Henry sprang to her almost before she had fallen.

"Ma," he called. "Ma, speak to me." He held her in his arms, all awkwardness gone in instant helpfulness and care.

But Lydia was helpful too, and Tom also. They laid Mrs. Moore on the bed near the stove. Lydia's medicine chest was brought from the wagon. She bathed the invalid's head with cool water.

Henry, standing by the bed, looked at her with gratitude.

"I don't know what I'd 'a' done if ye hadn't been here. I'm just skeered to death when Ma gits sick. The Lord must 'a' sent ye."

"He did send me," said Lydia with finality. "I had a leading to turn in here."

All next day Lydia devoted herself to Mrs. Moore. Tom was for going on their journey. But Lydia said Mrs. Moore needed her. And Tom knew Lydia well enough not to interfere with the Lord's work. Mrs. Moore mended rapidly, and on the third day was up and about, looking better than she had in months.

"It isn't the medicine ye gave me," she said to Lydia, "though Heaven knows that was right enough. But it's the way ye kept a-talkin'. Ye see I

was sure the Lord was against me. William dyin' and then Milly so soon after. I couldn't take it any other way. But ye've made me see the Lord meant well."

"Yes," said Lydia. She did not preach any further. She knew her work was done.

Now they would have gone upon their way, but to-day was First Day. It did not enter their minds that they could travel on First Day. To the Moores it was the Sabbath. It began on Saturday night at six o'clock with baked beans. Next morning they had cold breakfast, everything for Sabbath being prepared the day before. They went to church, baby and all, and came back to a cold but not untasty dinner. It seemed to Dencey that they even spoke in a different tone of voice—a Sabbath tone. And they spoke little. The whole day was given over to worship, solemnity, and *not* doing things. The silences were awful.

"I don't like Sabbaths," complained Ariel. "Thee's got to sit as still as the ground and watch the trees grow."

Dencey was glad when Henry came into the kitchen. He did so amuse her. He stood by the fireplace, carefully arranging the pothooks on the crane, first in groups of twos, then single file. At last he swallowed hard and asked her if she would go

to Beech Grove with him. He had his Bible in his hand. The Beech Grove was part of their own farm, a knoll that overlooked the Sound.

The two sat down in the checkered shade facing the wide brightness of the water. Henry opened his Bible without waiting. It seemed a refuge for his shyness.

"I thought mebbe ye'd read with me," he said. "I read the Bible through last year, and now I've nearly finished it agin. I've got it divided up so it takes just a year. I'm goin' to read it through that way as long as I live. Hev ye read it all?"

"No," said Dencey. "I read just the parts I like."

"I gave my heart to the Lord last April," he went on. "Ye've done thet too, haven't ye?"

"No," said Dencey again. Gracious, was Henry going to court her? Caring for each other's souls was a favorite form of courtship. Jetsam at once crossed her mind. Jetsam, who if he were here would stand glowering at Henry until that youth took himself off. Why, he had knocked Bob Merrill down for only walking home with her. Dencey loved to tease Jetsam that way. But now he was so far away it did not seem fair to him, sitting here. She stirred uneasily.

"I'm not in sin," she protested, her hair rising with discomfort. "Even Aunt Lovesta says so, and she's the wisest person in Nantucket."

"Ye don't seem as if sin nor any evil could come anigh ye," said Henry with great gentleness.

Oh, dear, that wasn't any better.

"Where has thee read to?" she demanded hastily.

"I've got to the Epistle of Philemon."

"Let me read it." She reached for the Bible. She had no idea of letting this awkward fellow read to her, pronouncing the words all wrong and perhaps following the lines with his finger.

"I like Philemon," she said. "It's so much like a letter anyone might write even to-day. I can just see the poor slave carrying it to his master."

"But 'epistle' means 'letter,'" Henry informed her. "It comes from the Greek 'ἐπιστολή.'"

Dencey turned with amaze to the awkward country figure.

"Does thee know Greek?" she inquired.

"Yes, I do. An' Latin too. An' ancient history, and enough mathematics to git into Yale."

Dencey was disconcerted. Perhaps Henry was not so comic after all. He was looking into space again. It seemed to take forever for him to think of anything to say.

"I'd like to tell ye something," he ventured. "I hadn't ought to talk about such things on the Sabbath, but ye'll be gone to-morrow. An' I hev to tell ye."

Dencey was startled again. But there was no need.

"It's been this way. I've been gittin' ready to go to Yale. A long while. Parson Stair at Stamford—he helped me. But then Pa died, and with the farm needin' me like that, it seemed plumb foolish. Ma said she'd git a hand for the spring ploughin', and then I'd come home and work summers. But I knew I'd be a hawg. Thet's an awful word to say, but I'd be one, goin' off an' leavin' everything to Ma. So—well—I give it up."

His voice had the sound of the grave. His heavy hands wrung themselves together until the knuckles whitened. He seemed to have forgotten Dencey.

"I want book larnin'," he said. "I want it so bad it aches me. Sometimes I can't hardly see to work, I'm thinkin' so about it. And then ye came. And your ma has made my ma so much better I plain don't know her. Then last night my ma's brother Bob—he's kinda shiftless and has got no farm o' his own—he come in an' says he'll do the spring ploughin' fur his winter keep."

"Yes," cried Dencey, all interest. "That will help."

"No, it won't," he answered bluntly. "Hit's the devil keeps whisperin' to me now that I can go. Hit's makin' me plum crazy!"

Dencey leaned forward. Henry, slowly gazing at her, thought that he had never seen anyone so beautiful. Could human eyes shine like that?

"Thee's crazy *not* to go, Henry Moore. It's not the devil—to learn things. It's good to learn. Why—why, everybody knows that. And Yale. Think of it."

Dencey had seen Yale only a few days ago. That gracious enviable place dispensing treasures to the male but closed to the female mind.

Henry clasped his hands hard about his two knees.

"Ye think that?" he queried hoarsely.

"I know it! Maybe thee'll be a great man and help thy mother. So thee can't dream the way thee'll help her."

"Ye must know," he said, gazing at her. "I can't see how ye could make a mistake."

"Of course I make mistakes. But not now. Thy mother would be a queer mother," said the daughter of Lydia, "if she kept thee from education."

Suddenly she added, "Let's go and tell her now."

Obediently he rose and followed Dencey. They came into the kitchen where the family still sat in Sabbath wordlessness.

"Mother," announced Dencey, "Henry wants to go to Yale. He's all ready to go—with learning, I mean—and he thinks he oughtn't. He's afraid his mother can't manage the farm. Thee talk to her about it. Right now."

Lydia was not so headlong as Dencey, but she was for Henry's chance at learning. Every Quaker was

so. And Tom coming in gave his instant hearty encouragement.

"I'll give thee a letter to Professor Silliman," said Tom, "that will give thee an extra chance. It's the privilege of a lifetime to be in contact with a man like that."

Mrs. Moore caught the enthusiasm and said she was thankful for her son's ambition, and she could manage the farm.

"But I'd have to start to-morrow morning," said Henry, pretending to object, though his face was all lighted up and changed. "Even then I'll be a day late for the opening."

"Never mind. Ye can start to-morrow," said his mother. "I'll sit up all night gettin' ye ready. Why—" as the jangling kitchen clock began to strike six—"Sabbath's over. I can begin to darn your socks right off."

Next morning, as the sun rose over the Sound, Henry started. He had begged the Coffyns to stay a few hours later than his parting to keep up his mother's spirit. He was all neat and spruced up, his face a-shine with soap, his body clad in his father's best suit. His small carpet bag carried all his belongings. He was to walk to New Haven in the hope that farm wagons would give him a lift now and then.

From the gate they watched him swinging down

the dew-damp road, the lighted sea to one side and the golden forest to the other, the makings of a national statesman in him.

An hour later the Coffyns were on their way. Sunshine again, and the good covered wagon. The horses were well rested by their stop-over. They passed Stamford. The Sound was nearly always in sight, growing narrower and narrower until it was like a river.

At the village of Port Chester they turned westward inland until they came to Yonkers; then crossed the narrow Spuyten Duyvïl by the only bridge into Manhattan.

They had left New England behind. They were not to meet it again.

CHAPTER XI

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO NEW YORK

THEY camped for the night in a rough hilly grove. They were still twelve miles from New York City. It was almost a day's journey down the length of Manhattan among the pretty farms and past the rugged outcroppings of rock. From all the hilltops they could see the Hudson, the Palisades—a wonder to Dencey, but rather low and monotonous in Tom's eyes after the big mountains of the world.

Gradually the rural post road became more crowded. Hucksters returning with empty carts, farmers' wagons going home. How the Albany coach galloped past them in its last relay to the city. Then quite suddenly the Albany Post Road became Broadway. The houses closed in a solid

row on either side. Drays rattled along with all manner of merchandise; peddlers called their wares in raucous voices. More and more people everywhere. Many stages now, dashing at breakneck speed. The Lady Clinton Stage, the Greenwich Village Stage, the Expedition Stage.

Peacock and Turkey tossed their heads and shied with horror. Tom held the reins taut in anxious hands.

"Those stage drivers throw prudence to the winds. They must be going twelve miles an hour. No pedestrian is safe."

"Is it like London?" queried Dencey, leaning out to catch a glimpse of the biggest bonnet of her experience.

"No, it's more confused than London. I don't know what will become of them if they go on like this."

Tom got out and led the horses. "Too great a risk," he said.

At the corner of Courtland Street was a wood pile, and a man sawing away at winter firewood. Tom stopped to ask him the way to a stable.

"Right down yonder by the river," he said. "The Lady Clinton Stage puts up its horses thar. Purty fine horses ye got. Goin' West?"

Ariel looked up at the high houses. So many of them, and no space between.

"I think this place is *stockery,*" he announced.

Ariel had made the whole family accept this invented word of his—a word of disapproval. Tom answered promptly:

"Thee's quite right, Son. If ever a place was stockery this is it." Thus spoke the New Englander.

They expected to put up at the City Hotel, but when they found they must room four flights up they refused and went to Mrs. Bradish's boarding house.

"How could anybody live so far from the ground?" said Lydia.

The New York that they were seeing held yet its village aspect. Katydids chirped in front of Mrs. Bradish's boarding house, gardens bloomed in the side streets, pigs and cows roamed, as indeed they did in all towns. But to these New Englanders it was an endless pile of brick and mortar. They felt the difference of mood which had always been "New York." In the beginning it had been founded for trade, the New England towns for home. New York was New York even at this time.

Next day Tom took Dencey to the New York Museum, alongside of the City Hall. He tried to show her the bones of an elephant and a mummified Indian boy. But to his chagrin Dencey would see nothing but the waxworks.

"How can they make people so real?" she ex-

claimed. "Look at that old hag. The wrinkles in her face are exactly like Injun Jill."

The hag in question was none other than the Witch of Endor, seated in a Windsor chair and dressed in the garb of a huckster woman on Broadway. The witch had just "raised" Samuel, who stood in his nightshirt looking very startled to be clad so in public. As for Saul, he had on a velvet coat with lace at the sleeves and Conestoga boots.

Truly a fascinating exhibit.

"That doesn't look like Saul," said Tom disgustedly.

"I don't care. It looks like a man. How in the world did anyone ever make it?"

Next morning at five the New Englanders were in their wagon, shaking the dust of New York from their feet. Wagon, horses, and all crossed the Hudson in a sail barge and landed in the gentle glades of Hoboken, where happy birds announced the morning from dew-wet bush and tree.

A week's slow journeying brought them to Philadelphia. Here they stayed with Thomas and Lucretia Mott. Lucretia was Tom's cousin and Lydia's dear friend. Lydia remained at home answering Lucretia's eager questions about the Coffyn cousins and Nantucket, talking of the anti-slavery question, Lucretia's fervent "concern,"

which was so new as to be dangerous. Tom again sought a museum.

This time it was the Academy of Natural Science, not much advanced beyond the New York Museum as to exhibits, but made into an educative force by the presence of a man who was always there, its self-constituted curator. This man, seeing Tom's interest, opened a case of shells which he was classifying, and both were soon lost in eager discussions. To Tom it was like suddenly breathing free, to be able to talk of these facts paramount to him and to find response and understanding instead of the lack of interest or contempt which was the custom. To this stranger the life of flowers had deep scientific import.

"But how does thee know so much of these studies?" asked the new friend. "Where did thee come from? Where is thee going?"

"I am going to Robert Owen's town, New Harmony," Tom answered.

"But I am going there also." The man's face shone with interest. "I am Thomas Say. Thee should come with us. Maclure is going, and the naturalist, Lesueur. Robert Owen is bringing a party of naturalists from England and Scotland. We are all going together by boat. It is by far the best way to travel. Indeed, the only way."

Tom was greatly tempted. Here were the very people he had longed to know.

"Is the party starting soon?"

"Well, Robert Owen has not yet landed from Europe. He does not hurry. When he comes he will probably make speeches in New York and here. He visits many persons to persuade them to emigrate to his town. We are awaiting him."

But Tom could not wait—or thought he could not. He could not linger indefinitely at his cousin's house, change all his plans, sell his wagon and horses, send his baggage by freight.

He decided to keep to the road. A simple decision it seemed. There was no warning that tragedy stood like a dark angel across that path.

CHAPTER XII

DUE WEST

FROM Philadelphia they traveled due west by the famous National Road. An uncompromising road it was, straight up the hills and down again. No turning aside for the National Highway. Peacock and Turkey groaned and puffed up the ascents and had to be held in with strength on the steep inclines. Hills ever higher and higher, for they were now crossing the Alleghenies. They met great droves of hogs being driven on foot to Philadelphia—such shouting of drivers, such terrible stench. They met smaller droves of oxen, and ever and again they met the Conestoga wagons.

"Listen, musicks!" exclaimed Ariel, standing up in his wagon seat to see.

"No, it's sleigh bells," said Dencey. "But who could be sleighing with no snow?"

Louder and louder came the sound, a very gale of bells. Then, over the near hill, it appeared.

"Horses! Horses!" cried Ariel, clapping his hands. Yes, eight, ten, twelve horses in pairs, each with a high iron arch above its neck and, from the arch, a bell ringing with every trot. Bells as big as farm dinner bells, smaller bells all the way down to the little tinklers that hung by the half dozen. Such a carillon was never heard: lyrics, madrigals, roundelays, and jigs, all in one. It seemed a ship sailing by music instead of wind.

The wagon was beautiful—large as a dory, painted bright blue with a red streak above. Hooded with white canvas and piled high with the load. For these Conestoga wagons were the great freight carriers of the West. The burly drivers cracked their whips and gave Tom good-day. Tom sprang from the wagon to Turkey's head as the commotion passed. But soon even Turkey was to grow used to the Conestoga wagons. There were so many.

They gave Dencey her first adventure of the road, and a bad one it was. The Conestoga drivers were a tribe to themselves and had inns separate from other folk all along the way. They were huge men, rough, swearing, drinking, carousing.

One evening the Coffyn family, weary and sore with the day's jolting, came to a good appearing

inn. Tom stayed by the horses, Lydia busied herself getting out the necessities, while Dencey, holding Ariel by the hand, entered the inn door. It was a crowded room, smelling of whisky and sawdust, loud with rough voices.

Dencey was turning back when a huge man darted from the bar and caught her in his suffocating arms.

"Hey, purty gal. Don't go. I'll tote ye," said his drunken voice. He tried to give her a sounding smack, which reached only her cap as Dencey ducked her head. At the same moment she snatched at his beard with her one free hand and gave it such a terrific jerk that the man dropped her, howling.

Dencey darted out, hearing the roar of derisive laughter from the crowd; then the man's clutch on her shoulder; then, oh, thankfulness! her father.

Tom had not been captain of a whaler for naught. He struck the man's hand away, bade him be off in a voice accustomed to be obeyed, and took the sobbing Dencey in both arms and led her back to the wagon.

Be assured, they rested in no inn that night. They drove to a lonely woodland place and all bunked together in the wagon.

At Philadelphia Tom, at the advice of Thomas

Say, had bought as necessities of the journey a Cramer's Navigator and a second gun.

"It's thy gun," he said to Dencey. "And I shall teach thee to shoot it."

"Isn't thee rather warlike?" said the Quaker Lydia.

"No. This is not for men, but for game," Tom assured her. "Thee'd better learn, too. Suppose I hurt a finger and couldn't shoot and we'd be without wild turkey for dinner."

"Two gunners are enough," she answered.

Now every noon Dencey practised. She had "beginner's luck" at first and shot almost the center of the mark her father had set up. Then she got worse and worse.

"I'd hate to shoot a live thing," she remarked—"a turkey or a rabbit."

"Well, there's not much danger at thy present rate of marksmanship," answered Tom. "How about the Conestoga driver?"

Dencey shuddered. "I wish I could forget him—forget everything about him. But, no," she added, unexpectedly Quaker, "I wouldn't want to shoot even him. There'd always be some decent person to stop him."

The inns became worse and worse along the way. The food was a mass of grease, the beds so dirty that Lydia spread her own sheets upon them and

then next day washed them in a stream. Often they were directed to sleep in one general room, the whole inn-full, some on beds, some wrapped in blankets on the floor.

So almost invariably the Nantucketers camped. On rainy nights they huddled into the wagon. On fine nights they spread their blankets in the open. Tom would find a big log lying against the wind. It would be four to six feet thick, a fine protection. Against this he would build his fire and light it by means of a tinder box. He shot rabbits and wild turkeys, for their bacons and hams were now almost used up. Dencey grew expert at this woodland cooking. She would patiently turn rabbit on the wooden spit, and could make corn pone in the ashes like any pioneer.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FLITTERS

BUT in spite of the rough road and rougher inns, the journeying was a holiday. The opulent sunshine of autumn weather, the vast wood growing wilder all the while, the foxes, rabbits, squirrels, and coons which whisked across their path. The quiet days rising out of the east and moving grandly over like some strong, glad presence. One can feel that only by being continually out of doors.

At the top of Chestnut Ridge Dencey had her sixteenth birthday.

"Isn't that a wonderful birthday present!" she said, waving her hand abroad. "Mountains! I'll never forget them, not in all my life."

"It's a grand sight," said Tom. Then the ecstasy of the scene kept them silent.

They stood at the top of the high divide and could look out over all the new West. First a grand downward sweep of valley, then the lordly lift beyond, and hills upon hills to the sky's edge. Near at hand one could see clearings like cruel gashes in the forest; but in the distance the wooded green closed up, a vast green plushy tide, to the horizon. The wind swept over, and like a sea it moved.

"Look, it has waves like the ocean," said Dencey wistfully.

"No," said Tom, the sea rover, watching the solemn motion of the forest sea. "Those forest waves move in circles. It's quite different from the sea waves. But somehow it feels like the sea."

"Tom," spoke up Lydia's quiet voice, "is that beautiful? I wish thee would always remind me when I should stop and look. I don't see fine things as thee does."

Tom looked at her, startled.

"Why, Lydia, of course thee knows whether a thing is beautiful or not."

"I don't seem to." And a hidden trail of pathos was in the tone. All Lydia's seeing was within.

"Look at the road," Dencey broke in. "I can count five, six—no, seven wagons and three horse-

men. All going in the same direction. It's all West—West—West."

This was true. Humanity was going West in those days like a moving flock. In all the westward journey after Philadelphia Tom's wagon had scarcely been out of sight of the "flitters," as they were called.

They came, these flitters, like rivulets stealing from widely scattered hills. While Tom's small wagon had been wending its unmarked way along the Connecticut shore others had been coming from Massachusetts, Vermont, New York, Jersey. Like streams of a watershed they converged upon this road. What was it that stirred human beings into restlessness and motioned them forward, driving, driving? They seemed no longer separate individuals, separate families. They were part of some hidden westering force, like the force that turns the world itself dipping into the east, and sends sun, moon, stars, and planets traveling westward over the sky.

Some of the wagons were handsome, like Tom's, and had two horses. More of them were small flimsy carts with one bony horse, ready to drop. All of them were piled and crowded with impossible quantities of furniture, tinware, tools, clothing. A patient cow trudged behind, coops of chickens cackled.

And always and ever there were the bulging, billowing, bouncing feather beds.

"If they build towns," said Dencey, "their houses will burst with feather beds. How can they need so many? And how can they keep their children so dirty and carry them in baskets as if they were kittens?"

For every wagon and cart swarmed with these future inhabitants of the West, and the pack horses carried them in baskets on either side.

"I heard a man say a funny thing the other day," remarked Tom: "that the New Englanders may be known by their cheerful women walking ahead of the wagon; the Jerseys by the women staying aboard; the Pennsylvanians by their lagging behind the cart as if they didn't want to go. Let's notice if it's true."

"I never walk in front of the wagon," said Lydia.

"But I do," put in Dencey, "Ariel and I, when we want to stretch our legs."

A poor squeaky wagon now arrived at the hilltop behind the Coffyns. The man stopped the horse, and they got out by the roadside for dinner.

"They hills be a' right," said the woman, looking over the scene, "but I wish we was just back among the moors o' Yorkshire."

"Weel, an' a Yorkshire pudding stid o' this eternal cornbread an' pork," answered the man.

"Mayhap when we gang to the Ohio it'll be better," spoke up a young son. "They all do say as it's a wonnurfu' river."

"Drat it all, I'm tired o' hearin' about the Ohio," the woman answered fretfully. "Always the Ohio, as if it war the onliest, beautifulest, biggest river in the wurreld."

This was true. "The Ohio" was on everybody's lips. The emigrants urged their teams to the Ohio as though it were the goal of all hope.

Lydia and Tom began to talk to the Yorkshire folk. Never was a more homesick group.

"If we'd only had sense aboot us an' not coom from England," said the woman. "We haven't bettered oursel's, we've worsened."

"Sha'n't we share our dinners?" said Lydia kindly, seeing how meager theirs was.

She brought out a Queen's cake which she herself had made at the inn, out of the last flour of their store. The delight of the Yorkshire folk was instant. Lydia's and Tom's friendliness seemed a light in a dark land.

"An' where did ye learn to cook like England?" inquired the man as he swallowed his first huge bite. "It's a'most like our own Yorkshire cookin'."

"I don't know, I'm sure. We always bake this cake in Nantucket," said Lydia.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SHADOW OF THE WILDERNESS

PITTSBURGH gave them their first view of the wonderful Ohio. Dencey, in whose mind still lived the broad, white-capped bay of Nantucket, thought it a muddy and altogether inconsiderable stream.

"Why, that little bit of water!" she exclaimed contemptuously. "In Nantucket they'd hardly know it existed. Rotten Punkin Pond is as good as that."

It was after they left Pittsburgh that the great forest began. Oh, very gently at first, with the National Road plunging through it under a cathedral arch of trees. Then deeper and deeper. A vast enclosing silence. They had some beautiful days. No direct goldenness of sunlight. That was shut

away from them in this forest place. Their tiny wagon seemed moving through some majestic, translucent amber room, ceilinged with gold and golden carpeted. Everywhere were lofty hung tapestries of scarlet, the woodbine infinitely embroidered with berries, the solemn grape so thick that it damped their voices passing it.

Dencey gazed and gazed until the poignancy of the beauty passed deep into her spirit. It was all new to Dencey. She had not known those cloudlike moments of happiness which pass over the minds of little children from trees and tree shadow. The ancient tree mood. Her Island had given her only distances and the sea.

"Dencey, Dencey," called her mother. "Come out of the *stood*. What is thee seeing?"

"Let her alone," said Tom devoutly. "It is not hard to see God in this place."

During these days the care of Ariel devolved almost wholly upon Dencey. Poor little Sally was worn out with long journeying. She had no baby-patience left for this forever going. She took all Lydia's attention. But Ariel loved the journey. He was always exclaiming at some new sight, always clambering back and forth in the wagon, always tumbling out, only to be snatched back by Dencey. Dencey had to tell him stories about every rabbit and fox that darted across the road, had to invent

games. As witness the "Game of Leaves." This consisted in placing a row of autumn leaves on one of the chests, and having Ariel name them. It was a rhyme:

> Oak tree, maple tree, dogwood, gum,
> Sassafras, sassafras, tulip, and plum.

She always had to put down two sassafras leaves, because Ariel loved the sound of that name. If she mixed the leaves he still called them right.

"I believe he will be a great naturalist," said Tom, proudly gazing down at him.

Then Ariel would look up into his father's face and laugh. He seemed to understand every motion of Tom's spirit.

At Wheeling the National Road marched straight westward to Columbus, but as yet was not finished to that place. If they followed it they would be a hundred and fifty miles out of their way. They must travel south and westward along the river road, that track which followed the Ohio, now burying itself for days in the forest, now coming out upon some river bluff. So again the momentous decision was made with no presage of its gravity.

A different going now. The road was no more than a way cut through the woods, stumps left standing. It was twist and turn, turn and twist, to avoid the stumps. It was bang, bump, bang, driv-

ing over the lesser ones. At this rate twelve miles a day was good progress. And how much deeper the forest now. Their voices were hushed within it. A solemn seclusion, a cloak of shadow which never let in the sun. They traveled for days among trees a hundred feet high, with no glimpse of surrounding country. The vine trunks were big in girth as small trees. The vine foliage covered the branches in wild profusion, weighed them down until oak, elm, and beech were mournful cloaked figures.

In this primordial world only the road held human touch. Strangely aware, it seemed to beckon them through the forest. It seemed still to hold the onward movement that had created it. The hoofs of buffalo and deer, the slow paws of bear finding their way to the salt licks or streams, the silent Indian feet on Indian errands using the old salt trail, the venturing lonely pioneers, and now the wagons. The road knew, it knew them all and held them all in memory. Wood-hidden, mysterious, alive.

A cabin seemed a brotherhood. The first day they traveled till afternoon before reaching one. The place swarmed with children. The settler sat at his door skinning a coon.

"Yes, ye kin come in," he told them without rising. "Jist take pot luck."

Pot luck meant greasy pork and corn pone. They slept both families in one log-built room.

"Will we never learn," said Tom as they drove away into the clean forest, "that we must sleep in the open?"

The night was sharp, as it is apt to be at the full of the moon. They laughed pluckily as they made ready for the night, bumping into each other in the crowded wagon. The night closed down a multitudinous chorus of forest voices, crickets, frogs, chirpers, and whirrers, which Tom could not name and which have since disappeared from this region. This din was always an astonishment to travelers. Ever and again it was punctuated by the howl of wolves in a pack. Spite of it all, weariness lulled them to sleep.

Then suddenly in the midnight the wolves were all about the wagon, snapping and yowling. Turkey, tethered in the wood, gave a frightened scream. Tom sprang up, shot his gun into the midst of the pack, then leaped out just in time to catch Turkey and Peacock, who were rearing with terror.

Carefully Tom built a fire to scare off the wolves and sat up the rest of the night.

After this they always built a fire. All the family industriously brought fagots to keep it alive during

the whole night. And the three, Tom, Lydia, and Dencey, took turns at watch.

Gracious! but it was hard to rouse out of one's warm blankets. Dencey always had to uncurl Ariel's hot little arms from about her neck. He was afraid of the "woofies." She took her gun (she was very proud of that) and sat by the glowing fire, plying the flame ever and again with fagots. Strange how afraid the wolves were of the glow. She could hear them howling in the distance or padding through the woods, cracking the twigs. And slowly, slowly, the dimly glimpsed moon passed over the forest roof, finding one little opening after another to peer through. The patches of moonlight were white like snow, and the rest inky black.

They met few travelers now, and most of these were rough, for the better sort of people went by river. But one cartful named Fisher were good honest folk, and for three days the Coffyns traveled with them. There was a youth in the family, and of course he elected to take the fire watch with Dencey.

No sooner were they seated by the fire than his hand stole over Dencey's. He seemed to do this as a matter of course.

"Is thee so afraid then, Zeb Fisher?" queried Dencey slyly.

"No, o' course not. But I reckon ye air."

"Thee reckons wrong," she answered. "Just thee keep thy hand to thyself. If I had thought thee was going to be silly I'd have made thee watch alone."

Suddenly out of the inky blackness of the wood came a cry, the most pitiful Dencey had ever heard. A child lost among the wolves and wailing in terror. She sprang up toward the sound, gun in hand, but the youth caught her back with an oath.

"Ye greenhorn!" he cried. "Ye tarnel greenhorn! Don't ye know a painter when ye hyar one?"

"A panther! It's a child," cried Dencey, struggling.

"It hain't, I tell ye. Them varmints, don't I know 'em? Keep still—ye idjit."

He pulled her down by the fire.

"I heard them things all my life," he told her. "Now ye mend the fire an' keep mendin'. I'll watch."

He held his gun ready. Dencey knew what a dead shot he was.

"But how can thee aim in the dark?"

"Cain't I see the varmint's eyes? Why, they shine like two live sparks agin' the firelight. All ye got to do is to hit atween 'em."

Dencey had reason a week later to wish this same Zeb Fisher with his "dead shot" were at her side.

CHAPTER XV

A FOREST FOE

THEY passed Gallipolis, that little collection of log houses filled with homesick French people. Then took up again the lonely forest journey. One warm afternoon the road suddenly came out upon the river. To the travelers it seemed a stream of light, as well as water—a sudden spread of sunshine, openness, and distant view. Unconsciously they all took long breaths and began to talk in louder voices. To add to their pleasure, there on the low bank stood one of the famous sycamores noted in *Cramer's Navigator* as a guide to river men.

Weary as he was, Tom was entranced by it. Magnificent as a cathedral, it stood alone, for it had conquered all trees about it. It was so large that

twenty men might just have reached around it. At thirty feet up the mighty trunk branched into five.

"And every one of the branches," said Dencey, dancing like a child in the intensity of her delight, "would make the biggest tree I ever saw. And, oh, why are they so white? How beautiful for them to be white like that!"

"Wherever the bark peels off," explained Tom, "it leaves the branch pure white. See the gray bark fragments lying about."

Ariel lifted up both his chubby arms.

"Birdies, birdies," he laughed. "Birdies that Jetsam gave us."

Clever baby! He was the first to see them, a flock of miniature parrakeets. With a sudden whir, they alighted upon the tree, green as jade upon the snow-white branches, chattering, quarreling for places, intense as free parrots always are, making the whole place as lively as an orchestra. Ariel really thought they were the birds Jetsam had given Dencey and that they had followed from Nantucket. Surely birds could do that.

Silent amid their flutterings, the gigantic branches reared their snowy strength against the blue sky.

Lydia's capped head now peeped from behind the tree trunk.

"Come inside," she said.

"Inside!" echoed Dencey.

Sure enough, on the farther side was an opening. The tree was completely hollow. They crowded in.

"See, it is a room," said Lydia. (The space was twelve feet in diameter.) "Why couldn't we camp in here to-night? It is dry. It would be so warm and clean."

"Indeed we can," answered Tom. "Son," he took Ariel's hand, "when thee gets to be an old man I want thee to remember that thee and thy whole family slept inside of a tree."

Dencey hurried to get the broom. How sweet the place was after the dirty cabins. How kind of Nature to provide a house all her own. They placed the beds inside, built a rousing fire at the entrance. They were ready for the night.

Dencey looked out upon the river. She had been hungry for that open space, that clearness and light. If she mounted the hill just beyond the sycamore she could see better. She took her gun from the wagon.

"Not much use," she laughed to herself, "the way I shoot." But her father had told her never to leave camp for any distance without it.

There was a dim little path leading up the hill. Otherwise Dencey could never have penetrated the thick growth. As it was she held her skirts closely about her, and ever and again had to free them

from the briers. The path was steep, real climbing.

She came out upon the bluff—took a long breath and stood still.

There was the river, the goal of so much seeking. How had she ever thought it insignificant, less than the sea? It was itself the lord of the wilderness which it had created. She could see three imperious curves, the purposeful gestures of the river's wish for the sea. These curves appeared out of the east and swept on and on among the hills to disappear westward. Gentle with the irresistible gentleness of power, it led men out into the new, difficult life.

Dencey stood there, touched by the solitary sweetness that early travelers always found. Amid all the scene was only one little flat boat moving far below. The eerie tinkling voices of the family afloat upon it came up to her; and faint and clear the crow of their rooster, a sound of home in the solitude.

She stood for a long while. Her place was under a low branching beech which would have been famous in any less splendid surroundings. Gradually she became aware of fear, a slow heavy sense of menace, as if someone were staring at her. How could that be in this solitude? Suddenly, without knowing why, she swerved to one side.

That moment a crash of branches, a dull flop like

a heavy roll of carpet dropped from height, a prodigious snarl, and there—there on the ground was a huge cat, a panther. It had meant to drop upon her.

But how it was yowling! It had dropped with front paws in a thorn bush. Did panthers ever mistake like that? It pulled out its paws from the thorns and began to lick them.

These thoughts were but an instant. Dencey meanwhile had gathered up her skirts and with gun in elbow ran down the path. Her dress caught on the briers, she tore away only to be caught again. She saw a low branching tree, and desperately, holding her gun with her one free hand, began to climb as fast as she could.

It was the worst thing she could have done.

That instant the beast looked up at her, stopped licking its paws, then slowly and determinedly came toward the tree.

Dencey screamed as she never supposed she could —a loud, inhuman wail. The beast was coming up after her, slowly, up and up. Below her, the branches began to snap and sway. She watched, fascinated, the slow, cruel skill of those climbing paws.

Then she thought of her gun. Gracious! She couldn't shoot! She couldn't shoot anything she aimed at. But, anyway, she aimed. In trembling

confusion she aimed at the broad tawny face coming toward her. Oh, so near, so near. Her arms shook so that the gun banged against a branch. Great heavens, it went off by itself! Boom!

And in one long instant the panther doubled up like a rag and fell crashing down the tree. It writhed upon the ground.

Dencey's courage came back to her, and she shot the second load. Missed, of course.

"Hello, Dencey! Dencey!"

Her father's head appeared up the steep path.

"Shoot it! Shoot it!" she shouted. "Oh, don't thee see it's suffering?"

But that instant, with a wild, terrible cry, the panther lay still.

Just then out of the thicket burst Zeb Fisher. Their wagon had caught up again.

"God a'mighty!" he cried. "A painter! And—ye!" Gazing up at Dencey with blank astonishment. "I never seed a gal so crazy about painters afore."

"But I'm not crazy about panthers. I didn't want to shoot it."

She was having great difficulty climbing down, her dress catching and tearing every turn.

"I don't see how I ever got up here," she said shakily.

Her father received her, and his hands trembled so that he could hardly disentangle her dress.

"Look here," he said, "this is the last of town dresses for thee, miss. Thee shall have a short linsey-woolsey like the forest girls. This might have caused thy death."

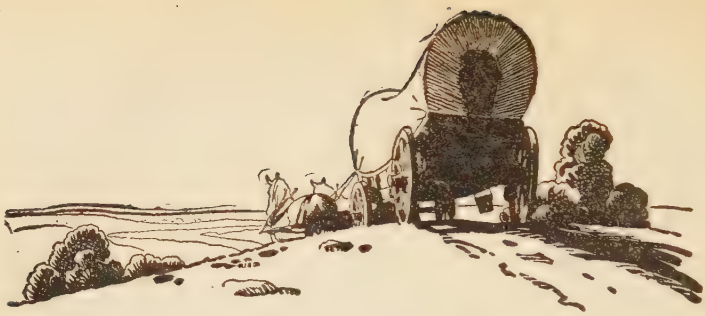
Zeb was poking at the poor beast's body with a long stick.

"Hit's never sure they're done for. My, but ye're a dead shot!" he exclaimed. "Right in the heart!"

"But I didn't aim at its heart. I aimed at its head. And, anyway, the gun just went off. I didn't shoot it."

None of these statements would Zeb believe. And he insisted, spite of all Dencey's remonstrances, in preparing the skin as a trophy.

"I'll jist nail it to the back o' yer wagon, and ye kin tell all and sundry how ye shot it."



CHAPTER XVI

THE CLEARING

DENCEY could never forget that night in the great sycamore tree. The firelight at the opening playing over the strange brown inner room. She so warm and safe after her adventure, and little Ariel sleeping close to her.

"Woofies can't get in our tree," he had said with confidence, but nevertheless his arm clung about her in his sleep.

Next day the Fisher family went north to Zanesville. The Coffyns were relieved. They had tired somewhat of the rough company.

And that very day Dencey had opportunity to get her linsey-woolsey dress. They came to a clearing, and, since Peacock had gone lame, they stopped near the cabin for the night. Here it proved they had to stay ten days while Peacock's foot recovered.

The clearing was like a thousand others in the great forest. Merely a hole cut in the forest growth. The stumps stood everywhere, the smell of burning logs still lingered, but the smaller logs and branches had been rolled to the edge, where they created a rough thicket. This looked to be a defense against marauding wolf or bear, but it served rather as their hiding place. The clearing made no more impression on the forest than the burrow of an animal in the brush. About it the great wood flowed unperturbed. The settler and his tribe seemed buried with no hope of emergence. Indeed, the settler himself believed the American forest could never be conquered.

"Why, man," he exclaimed to Tom, "don't hit go on an' on till hit reaches the prairas o' Illinois, and then all round the Great Lakes too?"

In this clearing were two cabins. The one of Hal Scott swarmed with children: sallow, scared little rabbits, who ran away at the appearance of the wagon. That of George McGilliard held Kitty, his wife, and their first baby. Kitty was Scott's oldest daughter and just Dencey's age.

"I'm mighty glad Kitty's man George took a notion to raise his cabin hyar," said Scott's tired-looking wife. "Don't know what I'd done ef he'd taken Kitty off. All my men folks ha' been the movin' kind."

Kitty had just finished weaving and making a linsey-woolsey dress for herself. With a little alteration this perfectly fitted Dencey. Kitty was proud to sell it for the generous sum Tom offered.

"I declare," said Tom, as Dencey stepped out of the cabin looking so strange in the short, skimpy dress, "if thee isn't a complete pioneer. Thee and thy linsey-woolsey and thy panther."

"I'm thankful the dress is gray, anyway," said Lydia.

Tom was thinking to himself that it did not seem to make any difference what she put on. She was always just so slender and upright and blooming. How brown her face had grown in this out-of-door travel. How rosy as compared to poor Kitty's. Kitty, like all the others of the clearing, was bleached white by the continual forest shade.

Kitty soon became Dencey's fast friend. She seemed to cling to Dencey as giving her a glimpse of something unknown before.

"I wisht I could be a little gal like ye air," she said.

"I'm not a little girl," said Dencey indignantly. "I'm taller than thee."

"Hit isn't that, hit's the way ye air. Ye hain't sober like me. Ye don't hev to think what might happen. Ye kin think about fun and kind o' expect it."

"Yes, I do expect it," Dencey returned. "All this seems fun to me. It's wonderful: the woods, the river, and traveling every day."

"The woods! Wonderful!" Kitty exclaimed. "Why, they hain't nothin' but a plumb nuisance." Kitty thought a moment. "Ef ye like the woods there's something a piece over thetaway that's a kind o' sight. Hit's a grand place to hunt. Wait, I'll git Maw to tend the baby and take ye thar."

Kitty deposited her little one at the other cabin and took a gun from the chimneypiece. She was nearly as good a shot as her brothers. They got through a gap in the brush thicket and were soon pushing cautiously through the forest. Dencey saw ahead of them an unusual gleam of sunlight.

"Thar 'tis," said Kitty.

They came out upon an opening. It was a vast avenue in the forest, six hundred to seven hundred yards wide, clear edged as though it were a road. But no human could make a road like that. The magnificent trees lay like stubble, tumbled over each other, uprooted, broken, bent double with tops touching the ground, twisted like corkscrews. Among their confusion the bushes and new saplings had struggled up, greedy of the sunshine. It was as impossible to penetrate as if it had been a roaring flood.

"How terrible! What did it?" asked Dencey.

"A hurricane," Kitty told her. "Hit went cuttin' through hyar eight year ago, afore we come. Hit went a hundred mile. The hunters, they tell of another one that starts way West an' cuts across Kaintuck' an' Illinois. No tellin' how long that is, nor when it come. An' it didn't hurt nobody 'cause nobody was thar."

Dencey gazed awestruck at the show of power.

"The hunters, they say hit's a powerful good place to hunt catamount an' bear."

"Let's go," Dencey suggested. "Let's go back to the cabin."

The Scotts had been pioneers for four generations. Always on the move. First across the sea to New England, then to Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and now Ohio. None of them could read or write. To Dencey, Kitty seemed wofully ignorant, but Tom in his days with Scott and his eldest son, Dan, began to realize a complete wisdom in them, that is, perfect fitness to surroundings. They knew their forest as a deer knows it.

There was not much difference between father and son. Only the father's face was more singularly set in expression. The mouth had added to its usual pioneer grimness a deep kindly humor, wise as the hills. Neither of them carried an ounce of superfluous flesh. And Tom noticed that Dan, even in carelessly crossing the clearing, had an alertness

that took in every stir in the woods, every passing shadow.

"That tarnel hawk," he would say without looking up. "Hain't he hangin' round now 'cause he knows we're a-goin' in fer dinner. He's got half our chickens a'ready."

Tom had thought himself a good shot, but with Dan beside him felt only awkward and stupid. Sid Scott, the twelve-year-old, could shoot better than he.

"I'm a-goin' outside purty soon," Dan said one day, as he strode in woods with his long soundless step.

"Outside?" queried Tom.

"Yes, 'way West, whar they hain't no trees—jist prairas."

After one of his long silences Dan asked:

"Whar'd ye say ye was goin'?"

"To Indiana."

"That hain't fur enough. Ye don't git prairas till Illinois, an' I'm choosin' the fur West o' that."

Tom wondered what Dan would do without his trees. He wielded an ax with the accurate swoop of a bird.

"Soon as I git me a wife," he added half to himself. "Susan Hugh, my gal up Gallipoleece way, she's a-goin' with me."

Yes, the Scotts must always be moving. "They

won't stop till they get to the Pacific," Tom thought as he watched Dan's inscrutable face.

At last Peacock was recovered, and the Coffyns started upon their march. The whole family came out to say good-bye. For Kitty there was real sorrow in the parting.

"It's goin' to be awful lonesome without ye," she said, with her big eyes fixed on Dencey's face.

"I'll write to thee," said Dencey, then gasped a little, for Kitty could not read.

Dencey climbed into the wagon, opened a chest, and fetched out one of her kerchiefs. She had once seen Kitty look longingly at its sheer whiteness.

"Keep this to remember me," she said.

"I'd never forget ye no-ways," Kitty answered.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SPRING IN THE VALLEY

THEY started in clear sunshine, but that same night Winter spoke for the first time. A gale from the west. By morning the whole forest was a roar of wind. Branches thrashed and agonized. Sometimes a huge branch crashed down. The leaves in companies and crowds rushed by, so the travelers could see only a few feet ahead. The near and distant roars mingled until Dencey thought she was hearing the breakers on the South Shore.

"I don't like this at all," grumbled Tom. "When we have a storm at sea there's always something to do. Reef the mainsail, change course, or drive before it. Here we have to take it with bowed head."

"But, Tom, thee knows very well thee is sometimes perfectly helpless at sea."

"Not like this," Tom maintained.

They decided to stay under a strong young oak. They were afraid to move. Presently the woods became filled with a delicious odor—an odor strangely living and sweet—like no flower they had ever known. It was the millions upon millions of torn branches and twigs and wrecked trees. By evening came a heavy rain.

The roads, difficult enough before, were doubly difficult now. Mud holes they met bore the pleasing legend, "No bottom." Other mud holes quite as deserving had failed to be so marked. Once they nearly lost Peacock, who floundered in to the belly. Poor beast, how terrified were her pink dilated nostrils and her rolling eyes. Finally, by Tom's and Turkey's united hauling, she plunged out, the mud popping like pistol shots at every emerging step. When she stood quivering on the bank Dencey went up and put both arms about the sweaty clay-stained neck.

"Poor Peacock," she said. "And thee never asked to come all this long way."

Late one afternoon they came to a little spring. It was in a deep, damp valley, but they stopped, for they were very tired. They were really thankful for the absence of leaves. More sunlight could filter in. The trees about the place were very solemn and tall.

"Firsty, firsty," cried out Ariel, pushing through the rough stake-and-rider fence that guarded the spring.

Dencey caught him just in time.

"Now, wait. We're all thirsty. Here's the cup."

She gave him a drink and drank also. The water was clear and sweet.

They sat down on a fallen log.

"I think," said Tom, "when we get to Cincinnati I'll sell the horses and take a steamboat. I cannot picture taking thee, Lydia, across the whole State of Indiana like this. The roads are awful."

"They say the roads are better when they're frozen," said Lydia patiently.

But it was to be many a day ere they reached Cincinnati. They camped that night by the spring. Next morning Dencey, searching for firewood, came across the skeleton of a cow, then the skeletons of two horses. She showed them to her father. They were not alarmed by this. But that morning in the wagon Ariel was very cross. He insisted upon pushing Sally off Lydia's lap and climbing up himself. "My mamma," he kept saying, "my lap, not Sally's."

"Go over to Dencey," said Lydia. "I can't think what's got into thee."

At noon he would eat no dinner, and Lydia, feeling his little hands, found them hot with fever.

Then almost at once he was a very ill little boy. Hastily they put away the dinner and got into the wagon.

"We must get to a cabin," said Tom. "I wonder if they ever have doctors."

It had been damp and cold all morning. Now rain began to fall. Tom pushed the horses as fast as was possible on the wretched roads, and hour by hour Ariel grew worse.

Toward nightfall they came to a cabin. It was a rough, miserable-looking place. A ragged woman came out, and Tom spoke to her.

"Boy sick," she repeated. "Let's see 'im first."

Her sharp face peered into the wagon, taking in furniture, dishes, everything, then Ariel's flushed face.

"H'm!" she grunted. "High fever. Say, did you-alls stop at that thar spring—the one with the fence around it?"

"Yes," said Tom. "Last night. What of it?"

"Whut uv it! Why, enough. Thet's the milk-sick* spring. This hyar boy's got the milk sick. Ye fools, didn't ye see the cow bones an' the horse bones all around it? Ye git away from hyar. Drive right along jist as quick as ye kin."

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*The disease called milk sick has entirely disappeared, and its nature and cause are not known. It once devastated whole towns in the pioneer country.

"But it's raining," said Lydia. "The child ought not to be in the rain."

"I don't keer, I won't hev my children ketchin' the milk sick. If ye don't go I'll switch yer horses fer ye."

"Can thee tell us of a doctor?" asked Tom.

"Tain't no use o' doctorin'," she insisted. "They allus die. Ye cut along, I tell ye."

Angry and threatening was her face, and now her husband came out, rougher and more lowering than she.

Tom quickly gave the horses the whip.

Dencey, as they jolted through the woods, found herself crying as though she had been cruelly punished.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE DESERTED CABIN

THAT night in the woods was like one long, terrible dream. The fire that kept going out on account of the rain, the rain itself falling so cruelly, the sighing trees, and Ariel's moaning. They were all busy waiting upon Lydia, who tended Ariel—Lydia, so quiet and resourceful, never once complaining of the lack of everything she needed for her work.

Dencey began to feel confused and dizzy. Now very hot, then suddenly colder than she had been even that snowy night on the Nantucket Commons. The next day, too, was all one confused dream. It must be a dream; it was too horrible to be true. They passed another cabin and were refused shel-

ter. Dencey was too confused to care. She only knew that her head was aching, and she was trying not to let Father and Mother know it.

She was vaguely aware of sunlight and afternoon and that they came at last to a clearing where a man came up to them, at first as rough and cruel as the others had been.

"Ye git along," he said. Then there was a low pleading conversation between him and her father. At last the man said:

"All right. Thar's thet ole empty cabin on the fur side o' the clearin'—ye kin take that. But not in my house. Wait, I'll build ye a fire in the chimley. Don't ye come in, though, till I'm gone."

Dencey knew when they came into the cabin. But she did not see that it was windowless and abominably dirty. She only saw the fresh fire in the fireplace. She hurried to it, kneeling and stretching out her shaking hands. What was the matter with the fire? It did not warm her in the least. Suddenly Dencey crumpled up in a heap upon the hearth.

After that came a long tumult of nights—no days at all. Dencey was miserably aware that her body was master, forcing upon her spirit its own cruel aches and shivery cold. She cowered before it. Would she ever again be the bright, happy, free Dencey who had always been herself?

But, no, she had forgotten. It was not she who was ill, it was Ariel. Ariel was dying. Oh, why could she not get up and keep Ariel from falling out of the wagon?

All of a sudden her father's arms were about her. He was kneeling by the bed.

"Get well, Dencey," he was crying. "Thee must live—live. We cannot let thee go."

But she could not help dying. She could not get back.

Was that Father or Jetsam holding her? She thought a long time and decided it was Jetsam. Why, of course, it was. She mustn't die and leave Jetsam. Father had Mother and Sally and Ariel to love him. Jetsam had only her, and she had promised to wait for him. A fine way to wait for him was this! To die. He couldn't ever find her if she died.

"Jetsam!" she called. She was aware that it was a loud, real call startling through the cabin.

And Jetsam was there holding her. They were on the Commons. Nantucket! Bright, shining, dear Nantucket. How close he held her. How strong he was. She was back now where she wanted to be.

All the ache and shivering left her. A warmth stole over her, and she fell asleep.

CHAPTER XIX

THE DARK ANGEL

SHE awoke after long weeks. She was still in the cabin. That surprised her. Father and Mother were standing by the fire. Father was sobbing—a deep racking sound. It was that which had wakened her. What was the matter with Father? Mother was quite still, holding him in both her arms.

"I cannot bear it!" he cried out. It was as if he were angry with Mother. "I tell thee I cannot."

Mother said nothing, holding him.

"If he had died I could bear it. But not this! Not this!"

"We prayed for Ariel to live," said Lydia.

"And what kind of a way is this to answer prayer? If God answers this way He is a devil and no God.

To paralyze a beautiful boy like that. Ariel! Ariel!"

He wrenched away from Lydia, pacing the dark cabin as if he would walk through the very walls.

Dencey saw now that Ariel, or what might be Ariel, a white, thin little figure, was lying on a feather bed near the fire. Sally lay on a pile of blankets in the corner, tossing up her tiny arms in that sweet detachment of sorrow that babies have.

Father kept on talking very swiftly.

"I have ruined my son. It is all my fault. My selfishness—taking him away from his home and safety into this."

He gestured toward the room.

"I have done it. I have ruined my son. And all for my wretched notion about science."

"No," said Lydia. "Thee shall not blame thyself. It is the wish that counts. Thee wished him only good."

"I was not thinking of him. I was thinking of myself. I have ruined my son—my son!"

Suddenly Lydia stepped to him and caught both his hands; just as she used to do with Dencey when she had disobeyed.

"Tom, thee shall not say that. It is not so, and thee knows it. Be quiet."

She spoke so strongly that Tom stopped. His head bowed.

"Lydia, help me," he whispered.

She lifted his face in both her hands, gazing into his eyes.

"Tom," she said softly. And Dencey all her life did not forget the love and tenderness, almost worship, in that word.

Dencey felt all at once that she must cling to that also.

"Mother!" she wailed. "What has happened to Ariel? Tell me."

Lydia crossed over to Dencey's bed, and strength came with her.

"Ariel is better," she said, "but we fear he will never walk."

Mother always told the truth like that.

"But will he be like old Aunt Sophie?"

Aunt Sophie in Nantucket had always been paralyzed, a white waxen image in a bed.

"We hope not," said Lydia. "We do not know. Tom," she called. "Dencey is wonderfully better. Let us bring her to the fire."

Somewhere in her lonely hours of prayer, her arid wrestling, Lydia had laid hold upon the life of God. Here at this journey's end she brought that to Tom and Dencey. She was calm and quiet and secure. In this dim lonely room Tom and Dencey lived only by her sustaining. It was she only who could still Ariel's weak crying, she only who could

undress and bathe his helpless body without tears. She kept Tom busy with fictitious duties: there was so little to do in the hut. And when Dencey could not bear the slow hours, she recited Psalms to her and a poem by the new young Quaker poet, Whittier.

But, oh, how long were those days in the cabin! It seemed to Dencey that for ages she had lain there and looked up at the dirty rafters, looked at the puncheon floor which had warped so it was all waves and bumps. The bed was of puncheon, too, all hills and hollows. Dencey never could have lain there if Father had not covered it with boughs and blankets. And at night how the wolves howled! Sometimes far off in the woods like mournfulness made audible. Sometimes yapping and snarling close about the cabin.

Winter came down upon them suddenly in the night, blanketing the forest and all the ugly clearing in pure white. The cabin was unchinked. The white light of the snow gleamed through between the logs; yes, and the snow itself drifted in, driven by bitter wind. Father kept the fire roaring in the chimney. One night, as Dencey lay in her corner bed, a wolf stuck his cold nose through a chink and sniffed at her head.

But it was when Dencey was better and about the room that her real sorrow came—the sorrow

of Ariel. He wanted no stories now. Only for her to sit by him and hold his little thin hand. Sometimes she could not stand it—Ariel so silent, patient, with such large brown eyes in that white, unfamiliar face.

She would have to run away out into the cold to cry. Mother did not cry. She kept always her quiet, industrious cheer.

They began to plan their removal. Dencey was now well able to travel, and Ariel, able or not, could not remain the winter in the cabin. They would go to the nearest settlement and there remain.

Turkey had died of some so-called "milk sick." Dencey could dimly remember the afternoon of their arrival and her father leading the faltering Turkey off into the forest to die. Turkey, so swift to naughtiness! Now Tom had to go away to buy another horse.

It was on the night of his absence that Dencey awoke to see her mother kneeling by the fire. She was weeping—bowed upon herself and weeping bitterly. Dencey was frightened. If Mother gave up, what indeed was there to cling to? She did not go to Lydia. Their old estrangement held her. She was too shy to break in upon her mother's grief. Oh, after all, was Father right, that God was like a devil? He had beaten down Father, Ariel, Dencey, and now Mother. God, who to Dencey had

always been like natural accustomed sunshine, faded out of her and left her desolate.

As she watched her mother she was startled to see her look up with a little exclamation—"Oh!"—as if someone had touched her.

"Yes, Lord," Lydia whispered from parted lips. "Yes, yes."

Was that the firelight upon her face, or was it some light within the face itself?

Dencey leaped from the bed in wild alarm.

"Mother, Mother, is thee dying?"

Lydia turned, spread out both arms to her like a receiving saint, and caught Dencey close. Had the embrace been accustomed it would not have stirred Dencey so deeply. But Mother had never held her thus before—a very outpouring of safety, an astonishment of love. Dencey cowered within it out of all storm.

"Even as I hold thee," said Lydia, "so our Lord holds thee and me in His love."

"But Ariel——?" queried Dencey.

"Safe—Ariel, too," she answered.

"Then he will get well and walk?" Dencey asked.

"I do not know. Walking or not, he is safe—safe."

Even yet that strange light of vision in Lydia's face. With Dencey the vision at once translated

itself into action. Her feet should become Ariel's feet to run and walk for him; her hands, his, to do what Ariel could not reach. And she would sit by him, teach him, amuse him. She would make him forget that her powers were not his own. Such was the love for her little brother that rose up to defend him in his need.

CHAPTER XX

THE BOATLOAD OF KNOWLEDGE

AT LAST, at last, they were ready to go, the cabin emptied of their belongings and the wagon packed. The new bony horse and Peacock, almost as bony, stood shivering in the cold. The settler of the little clearing and his family came out to watch them go. All stood at a distance, fearing the plague.

"The roads air all froze," the man encouraged them. "An' the cricks froze too. They'll be easy to git across. Ye'll hev an easier time than what ye did."

Yes, it was an easier time as far as journeying was concerned. The wagon bumped over the iron-hard frozen stumps and ruts, but they had no mud holes. The air was quiet and they were well wrapped. But it seemed as though sorrow herself sat in the wagon and journeyed with them. Father

drove looking doggedly ahead. Mother spoke to him now and then, but he did not answer. All were thinking of the boisterous Ariel, flourishing, climbing hither and yon in the wagon, laughing, demanding with those sudden little flurries of impatience. And now this silent, patient figure was lying wrapped on a couch. It was as if some fairy beam of light had been flickering everywhere and now had gone out.

They came to Massey's Station and stopped at a cabin fire to warm themselves.

"Whaur ye goin'?" asked the settler, eager for news.

"To Cincinnati, if we can reach there," said Tom. "We want to get doctor's help for the little lad."

"Right smart sprinkle o' travelers on the road," the man informed them, "even if it is winter. Course, a lot of 'em goes by water. But they're down on their luck, now the river's froze."

"Yes," said Tom, "all the boats must be held up."

"They air that! Keels an arks, steamboats an' all. Why, they's a keel boat down hyar a piece with about thirty people aboard. They've been thar fur a week."

"Yes," said Tom, not hearing. He was trying to warm Ariel's cold little hands, fearing that with

his poor circulation he might take harm in the cold.

"Yes, sirree. An' a queer bunch o' folks they air, too. Singin' hymns o' their own makin' without mention o' Gawd, skatin' an' sich. An' they do say they dance every night. They're that crowd as has sold themselves to the devil. Robert Owen's aboard."

"Robert Owen!" shouted Tom, as if he had been shot.

"Yes—goin' somewhere down in Injianny. Harmonville, or some sich name."

"Does thee mean Harmony?" asked Tom.

"Yes, that's it. Harmony."

"Where are they?" cried Tom wildly. "How can I get to them? What road?"

Lydia and Dencey crowded up with questions.

"Hit's about three mile on the road, this hyar one that runs by the house; then ye turns toward the river on a branch road like. There's a sign up—'To the River.'"

"It must be the Harmony party," Tom said breathlessly to Lydia. "Thomas Say, Maclure, Owen—all of them. They were coming by steamboat."

"This hyar ain't no steamboat," said the man. "Hit's a big keel boat."

Tom was bundling up Ariel, Dencey had fas-

tened her cape and bonnet, Lydia, Sally, all were ready.

"Why, air ye belongin' to 'em?" asked the man disapprovingly.

"We are indeed."

"Well, ye didn't look like sich a wild set. Ye'd better hurry. They was talkin' of leavin' the keel go an' travelin' by wagon."

In a few moments they were jogging, pushing, hurrying along the road. The very horses seemed to feel the difference and to pull with more vigor and spirit. Lydia took Ariel in her arms to save him from the jolting, and Dencey held Sally.

Oh, what if the Harmony folk had already gone!

Dencey's heart stood still between hope and apprehension. If they were gone she could not stand it. She could not.

They came to the branch river road and turned up it. It was unbelievably rough with briars and and canebrake. A log had fallen across, and Tom had a great ado to get the wagon over it. If the road was so impossible it looked as though the party had gone. Lydia held Ariel close to keep the jarring from him. His legs hung dangling. Lydia hastily gathered him closer lest Tom should see.

The road was narrow, hardly more than a path. Tom was in too great a hurry. They found that the wagon would not move, jammed in between two

trees. Tom got out and tried to pull—unhitched the horses and tied them to the back wheels. All to no avail. Even in the cold he was sweating with anxiety.

"Tom," said Lydia, "why doesn't thee go on afoot? It cannot be far. We will wait here for thee."

Tom threw his ax into the wagon and hurried off.

Lydia and Dencey sat there with the children. They were aware now in the silence that snow was beginning, a gentle frozen snow, ticking, ticking on dry leaves. The moments seemed like hours.

Tears filled Dencey's eyes and began to trickle coldly down her face.

"Mother," she said, "if I could see, oh, just any little back street of Nantucket—even just a bit of Stone Alley—I believe I'd die of joy."

"Stop!" Her mother spoke as if Dencey had struck her. "We cannot bear to think of Nantucket now."

A half hour passed. Still no Tom. And the moments dragged on. Lydia sat holding Ariel; Dencey holding Sally.

Suddenly through the wood came a faint "Ho-la! Ho-la! We're coming." Such cheerful, bright voices. Then Father's voice, louder: "Ho-la, Lydia—Dencey!"

"Ho-la! Here we are," shouted Dencey in return.

A moment later broke through the bushes Father and three men: men such as they had not seen for ages—keen, upstanding, well dressed, instantly solicitous and kind.

"Lydia," said Tom, "this is Mr. Say, this Mr. Lesueur, and this Mr. Owen."

Poor Lydia, huddled in the wagon with Ariel in her arms, tried to reach out her hand. But before she could do so Thomas Say had Ariel in his own arms.

"I will carry the boy for thee," he said.

The "plain language!" It came so suddenly to Lydia that tears filled her eyes.

"Oh," she cried, "to be with Friends!"

"You are with friends in more sense than you mean," said a courteous voice, and Robert Owen reached into the wagon in his quick, energetic fashion to help her out. "We would not for worlds have had you meet with such misfortune coming to us. If you had only traveled with us in the first place!"

Tom was pulling out the carpet bags.

"Never mind that, Mr. Coffyn," said Owen, holding up his hand. Dencey noticed what a small hand it was, and yet how strong. "My son and the others will bring all your gear, and our boatmen will see to your horses. What is important now is yourselves."

"Come, mademoiselle. You are to be my care," said the tall man whom Tom had called Lesueur. "Yes, *you*." He nodded to her. "Now, see, you are alighted—and so small *enfant*. I fear I would nevaire so dare to carry such. But I will retain hold upon your arm and guide you along ze road."

"Yes," murmured Dencey, overcome with shyness. "I can carry Sally."

Dencey had never read stories of society. Lesueur's manners and courtesy overwhelmed her. Now he pushed aside a briar, saying, "There, mademoiselle—safelee passed." Now helped her around a stump she was perfectly able to negotiate. Now half lifted her over a log that really was difficult. Each time it was, "Excuse me, mademoiselle." *"Oui."* "Careful." "Veerie good."

Dencey could not adjust herself to this sudden change from lonely tragedy to the high polish of the drawing room. "Why," she thought, "it's the way the princes talk to the princesses in *Arabian Nights*."

Meanwhile Robert Owen was conducting Lydia. He was a short, stocky man, but what a big face, all expression and earnestness, and eyes that crinkled up with affection for "all the world." Lydia was not slow to recognize the dreamer of an ideal, even though he was not like George Fox nor Stephen Grellet. Indeed, he was already airing that ideal.

He never failed to do so—would have done it on a desert island.

"Mrs. Coffyn, you have paid dear to come to Harmony, but our Harmony will reward you in good measure, pressed down and running over. You have children. They shall receive the best knowledge that the world affords. And your little son shall be taught to be sincere and fearless. He shall be an enlightened man!"

"We have always taught him to be sincere," said Lydia, strangely grateful that Owen should regard Ariel as already well and able to study.

"Yes. Your Quaker sect has much of truth. But in the world you meet obstacles. In Harmony he will have no obstacles to truth-telling. None at all."

Thomas Say, carrying Ariel, was already in eager conversation with Tom.

"Thee must see the specimen and my description. I have classified it as *Helicina occulta.* But I want thy opinion."

Lesueur and Dencey came out upon the river bank. Below them near the shore lay the long keel boat, dim in the falling snow.

"Behold ze bark of our *aventure,"* said Lesueur with a flourish. "Robert Owen name it *Ze Philanthropist.* But ze young folk have alreadee dub it *Boatload of Knowledge.* Ah, my knowledge mus'

be part of ze cargo. Zat will not weigh heavy, mademoiselle."

Dencey was too much Quaker to make any deprecatory answer. How good it looked, the long clean boat with the cabin or house running almost the whole length of it. It was tied to a willow, but at present there was no need. It was anchored solidly in ice.

Lesueur helped her down the slippery clay bank. As she crossed the gangplank Dencey met face to face two young ladies who seemed awaiting her.

Lesueur bowed. "Young ladies, zis is Mademoiselle Coffyn. Virginie Dupalais, and Lucy Sistaire."

"How do you do?" said the girls a little uncertainly.

Instantly Dencey was aware of her dreadful linsey-woolsey, her bonnet faded in many a rain. And her dress all muddy, too, with trying to help Father in the wood. The young ladies had on fashionable cloaks and flowered bonnets. She caught a glimpse, too, of their bright, short-waisted dresses.

They led her into the cabin.

"Oh," she said, red with misery, "I must change my dress. Please don't think I usually wear linsey-woolsey. Father made me get it after I shot the panther."

"Shot the panther!" cried out both girls in chorus.

"I—didn't really shoot it," hastened the honest Dencey. "My gun bumped on the tree and just went off."

"Just went off—but where was the panther?"

"It was coming up the tree after me—and——"

"Oh—oh—oh——"

The girls gave wails of delight. "Tell us—tell us!" urged Virginie. "Why, you are a real pioneer. It's like a Cooper novel. Oh, we've just longed and longed to meet a real frontier heroine."

They wouldn't listen to any denials.

"Thee is just modest," said Lucy. (Aha, Lucy was a Quaker.) "Here, give me the baby so thee can tell better."

"Zere is a panther skin fastened to ze wagon. Might zat be it?" questioned Lesueur.

"Yes—but——"

Two dark foreign looking boys edged near to listen, their black eyes astare with interest. Dencey remonstrated, urged, "It was only an accident."

But she wouldn't have been Dencey if she could have resisted so thrilling a recital—the lonely hill-top, the sudden flop of the wild beast, almost upon her head, her difficulty in climbing the tree, the dreadful fierce cat face and growling jaws.

Three more boys crowded near. Lesueur listened with an amused twinkle.

As she finished he made a deep bow.

"Behold ze fair huntress," he said.

Dencey was a success!

CHAPTER XXI

THE WELCOME

MEANWHILE Lydia was met by an energetic black-eyed French lady, Madame Fretageot.

"Are they all French?" thought Lydia with dismay.

Tom brought the bags and blankets, and Thomas Say brought Ariel, laying him tenderly upon the first bunk he came to.

Madame Fretageot bent kindly over the child. "Ah, zey have tell me of ze invaleed. I have already require ze cook to heat milk of him. Wait a moment."

She hurried to the kitchen.

Poor Ariel was well-nigh spent by the day's travel. He closed his eyes and breathed in such short exhausted breaths that Tom was frightened. Madame Fretageot returned with the milk.

"Darling," said Lydia, lifting Ariel's head, "will thee try to drink this for Mother?"

"No drink," he murmured wearily.

"Yes, yes." She forced the cup to his lips. With the first taste of the milk Ariel opened his eyes and drank hungrily.

"Good," he murmured, lying back again.

"Lydia," whispered Tom, "he smiled, did thee see that?"

"Ah, have I not say, 'We must have a cow on board ze *Philanthropist?*' Ze lofty idees, zey are fine. But ze young peoples, my pupils, must have sustainment. Ze cow is my insistence."

"Here is Dr. Price," said Thomas Say's rich voice.

Lydia turned to see a broad-faced young man with blue, merry, kindly eyes.

"A doctor?" breathed Lydia. A great burden seemed to roll off her shoulders. The young physician took up the burden with confidence and skill.

"Poor little chap," he said, feeling his pulse. "He's too tired for much handling at present."

Then Lydia asked the question which she had

been fearing to ask since the moment she met these people.

"He has had what they call the milk sick. Is there danger of contagion? If so, of course, we must leave the boat at once."

"Not at all, not at all, the milk sick runs for ten days. The child has left that behind him long ago. All he needs is good food and warmth and care."

"And zat we will give him," said Madame Fretageot.

Robert Owen entered the conversation.

"Do you suppose, madame, that if it had been contagious we would have abandoned you? We would have found some way to provide for you in any case."

Surely, thought Tom and Lydia, they had come out of a bad dream. Or was this a dream, the continual active kindness of these strangers? They seemed to regard the matter as an interesting adventure.

"What wonderful good luck that you found us. Dear me, if we had only known before, we would have stopped the boat at Wheeling, at Beaver Falls —anywhere—and searched the roads for you."

Madame Fretageot insisted upon giving Lydia her bed.

"No, it is nothing for me to change. Virginie,

she will give me her couch and she sleep with Luceé. You have the so ill little son and the *enfant.*"

Lydia suddenly realized that she was wearier than ever she had been in her life. Her whole body sank with it. Before she knew it tears filled her eyes and coursed down her cheeks.

"Thee must do as thee will," she said. "I have no strength even to thank thee."

There had been planned some entertainment for the evening. It was abandoned in consideration of the Coffyns. Everybody went to bed early—the women in their quarters, the men in theirs. Dencey slept on a pile of blankets near Virginie and Lucy. She was already as intimate with them as if they had been Hopestill in Nantucket.

As for Lydia, she was to learn in a later day that these people had strange notions about the pleasures of life—music and dancing; notions stranger yet about God; but Lydia gave her allegiance to them at this time. And Lydia, once won, was won for always.

CHAPTER XXII

ARIEL'S SURPRISE

ROBERT OWEN'S keel boat was a craft eighty feet long with a house almost the entire length of it and small decks fore and aft. At the stern it had an enormous sweep or paddle for steering. Other sweeps were at hand to be used in emergency. There were no sails. The boat was merely to float with the current, about three miles an hour.

The house was divided into three compartments. The men's quarters in the bow, the women's amidships, with doors opening port and starboard on a narrow deck passageway. The kitchen at the stern. The kitchen had a fireplace built of stones and mortar, with crane, kettle, and all. Why they did not have a Franklin stove Heaven knows, but they

did not. A door opened from this into the ladies' cabin, so that the fireplace heated there too. At night the kitchen apparatus was rolled into the corners, and the kitchen, with the ladies' apartment, became the scene of their revels. Simple surroundings indeed, but to the Coffyn family, after their wilderness wanderings, it seemed luxury indeed.

Lydia slept so soundly that she had to be wakened by Dencey.

"Mother," said Dencey with a little break in her voice, "Ariel is asking for milk, and, Mother, he isn't just asking—there is a little sound of *demanding*. I'm so glad to hear him do that."

At breakfast Madame Fretageot adjured the others to drink less milk. "It must be saved for the invaleed."

"But, Madame Fretageot," said Tom. "We cannot demand the milk that belongs to you all. We shall have to buy——"

"No—no—no!" said Madame, "but since you are come among us the cow is yours—yours also. No thing belong to anybody, but to all. That is the so wonderful principle of Mr. Owen."

"It is the so wonderful principle of Jesus," thought Lydia, but she was too thankful for the care to say anything.

After breakfast Dr. Price came in to see Ariel.

"Why, he is better," said the young doctor. "Who

would have thought the change would come so soon? It's a strange disease," he added to Lydia. "Nobody knows its cause—bad milk, bad water, or some growth in the wood. I don't wonder the settlers are so terrified at it. It is a bolt out of the dark."

"Now, son," he said to Ariel, "let's see those legs of thine."

He turned down the covers. Lydia averted her face. She could not bear to see those white helpless spindles that had been Ariel's legs.

Suddenly Ariel cried out with pain. Lydia looked back to see the doctor sticking his foot with a needle.

"Naughty man," cried Ariel. "Oh, naughty man."

"See, see!" exclaimed the eager young physician. "He feels! I knew it! He has feeling in both feet."

"Now, son," he added, "thee pull thy legs up in bed or I'll stick them both worse than that."

Ariel wailed, "I can't, can't, can't," stretching out his arms to Lydia, amazed that she did not protect him.

"Do it quick," commanded Dr. Price. "Here I come!"

But just as the needle touched the two thin legs jerked back—a wobbly uncertain movement, but moving—moving of Ariel's own volition.

Lydia fell on her knees beside the bed, gather-

ing her boy into her shaking arms. Then she sprang to her feet. "I must tell Tom," she said.

She ran out. Tom was on the bank, feeding the horses. He saw at once that something had happened and fairly ran to Lydia.

"Tom, it is beyond belief," she cried. "He moved! Ariel moved his legs."

They hurried back to the cabin. Dencey was already there.

"Mother, he moved again," she told them, her voice all quivering with joy. "The doctor says he will surely walk again."

Tom stood by the bed utterly speechless. It was too much, the sudden lifting of that sense of guilt, that self-denunciation which like a black cloud had enveloped him, waking or sleeping, shutting out all light.

The room began to look strange to Tom, the faces far away. Then, abruptly, he was aware that Dencey's frightened arms were about him, and the doctor was putting something under his nose that smelt abominably strong.

"Well, friend," laughed Dr. Price. "Am I going to have two patients instead of one?"

Of course, Dr. Price charged nothing for his services. That was part of "the Principles."

CHAPTER XXIII

VITA NUOVA

AFTER this began the most wonderful life Dencey had ever known. Who could fail to catch the spirit of joy that pervaded the whole boat? These men and women had been set free to follow their dreams, and they all had dreams to follow, high purposes hindered until now. It was a flight of the spirit. If the souls of these persons had been visible they would have been as birds, flying up above the crude boat roof, each straight to some self-seen goal.

Now it was Lesueur, Say, and Tom Coffyn starting out to study the infinite unknown of the pioneer woods, now Robert Owen describing the beautiful town which only awaited their coming to give them home education and the first true happiness. Now Madame Fretageot was showing a new way to teach mathematics, or young Robert Dale Owen

writing a hymn of the new enlightenment. Virginie, Lucy, and Dencey went skating on the river, helped by the French boys, Amadie Dufour and Achille Fretageot. The boys were skilled and cut figure eights on the ice.

The mere delight of three meals a day with these people was enough to entrance any girl. The talk was positively electric. Perhaps nowhere in the world at that moment was gathered a more brilliant tableful than in that rude kitchen of the *Philanthropist,* with the wilderness looming about them and the solitary frozen river penning them in.

Maclure talked of his travels in Europe and Asia, his single-man geology expedition of the whole United States, when so new was his enterprise that people had driven him from their doors, calling him "a crazy man allus breakin' rocks." Robert Owen described the infant schools in New Lanark, where the poor little factory children were taken from their killing labor and made rosy, happy and good. How the Prince of Russia came to wonder at them. Lesueur told of the new Austral region, New Holland, which had animals the like of which no one had ever seen. Thomas Say told of the herds of buffalo he had seen on the Far Western plains, of the Indians and their curious rites and beliefs. All, all was first-hand knowledge with the dew of morning upon it.

It was not supposed to be "instructive." But Dencey in that few weeks of listening was *educated.* All the instruction that came before and after this was mere furbelows and embroideries upon the deep livingness with which Dencey laid hold upon the wonder of the world.

Even the little children aboard—and there were nine of these—always looked back upon this voyage as the happiest of their lives.

It was while they were at breakfast the third morning that they were suddenly startled by cannon shots. Terrible reports, near, far, and everywhere. Tom, who had been in the Arctic, knew the sound at once.

"The ice breaking," he shouted, and ran out to secure the boat, knowing well the danger that would ensue.

Thomas Say and two boatmen rushed to help him. They tied the boat bow and stern with strong ropes to trees on shore. From the deck of the *Philanthropist* the interested travelers watched the scene.

Boom, boom! as the deep fissures spread and cracked along the ice floor. Then the ice began to move down stream. Slowly at first, so that they could hardly note the movement. Then faster, faster. By great areas and masses, by small cakes

that crowded and ground upon each other. Great blocks leaped into the air, pushing, crowding, whirling upon each other. Well for the *Philanthropist* that she was not in midcurrent of the struggle. It was like the mad herd of buffalo Say had told about rushing down stream.

The next morning the river was clear and smiling as though it could not possibly fly into a passion like that. The *Boatload of Knowledge* pulled up anchor. At last, after her long delay, she was able to start.

Everybody rushed about the boat, telling each other, "We're off!" "Bravo!" "At last!" "Isn't it fine?" "Ship ahoy!"

"Why," smiled Tom, "we whalers didn't make this much fuss starting on a four-year voyage."

"Let's sing a hymn," suggested one of the young folk.

"What hymn?"

"The one Robert Dale wrote last Thursday."

And so, as the *Boatload of Knowledge* commenced its slow, peaceful floating in midcurrent, this song echoed over the water:

"Oh, soon will come the glorious day
Inscribed on Mercy's brow,
When Truth shall rend the veil away
Which blinds the nations now.
The race of men shall wisdom learn

And error cease to reign.
The charms of Innocence return
And all be new again."

. . . . . .

A boat under its own power, be it steam, sail, or even the human effort of oars, retains a character of volition and rebuttal; but floating it becomes part of the elemental stream. The *Boatload of Knowledge* floated with the current. It was as much a part of the river as the chance log, or the twig that slowly circled in the water.

Dencey, sitting beside the sleeping Ariel on deck, felt herself drawn toward that solemn presence—the River, lordly, slow, reticent, busy at its own great task, its part of the life flow of the planet to the sea. As to the puny human folk clinging to be carried also it was disregardful. Onward it went into the heart of the unknown. As far as Dencey could see was no human habitation. Just the hills with the gray winter woods mounting them, mounting to the tops and flowing over into unending forest. Now she was passing one of those deep, deep glens which plunged down between the hills, so full of growth and tangle that no man might penetrate them. Only snakes and foxes knew that way. The Ohio of that day was not broader than now, but it seemed broader. Solitary, dominating the

whole landscape. The forests were its possession, the hills its recent making as it swept on its huge, inevitable curves toward the sea.

Dencey was awed, almost frightened. She was glad when Ariel awoke and demanded a story.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE ENTERTAINMENT

AT NIGHT the *Boatload of Knowledge* made shore and tied itself to a willow. On each such night was held an "entertainment." Hence the shock to the settlers on shore. But their second night out was the most lovely performance of all because the two royal ones took part. These royalties were namely: Robert Dale, Owen's son, and his intimate, Captain MacHugh.

The evening began by Virginie Dupalais playing upon her piano, a tiny instrument almost small enough to be carried by Virginie herself, but marvelous in that day of beginnings. Virginie played well. Dencey was thrilled by the music, near and allowable as it had never been before. Then Lucy Sistaire sang "Afton Water" with Virginie's accompaniment. Then Maclure explained his latest theory of the origin of volcanoes, and described

some great volcanoes he had seen. Robert Dale recited a long poem by Byron, all flowing words and vivid word-pictures.

At the end of the poem Robert Dale held up his hand to silence the applause and said, "We have a surprise for you to-night. I know you will enjoy it. Victor—now!" He nodded to Victor Dupalais, Virginie's brother, who at once set up scraping on his violin, a lively Highland Fling.

At that moment the door opened and there leaped into their midst Captain MacHugh, clad in his brilliant MacHugh plaid—kiltie, sash, bonnet, and all, even to the fringed pocket dangling in front.

He took the gay, manly attitude, one arm akimbo, the other arched overhead. His black eyes flashed a smile upon the company, then——

Dencey's breath left her body. She didn't know that she was sitting there or that she had weight or being. She only knew that swift joy, color, astounding motion and beauty were sparkling before her. Each new step was utterly unexpected and unknown. Now his feet spurned the earth, as though he were a creature of air. No groundling left in him. Now he twirled until the kiltie stood out like a ball dress; now reversed, when the kiltie swung banner-like about him. Youth at its task of making joy visible. Faster and faster played Victor; faster and faster flew MacHugh. The floor shook with his

stamping feet. Oh, he couldn't dance any faster. But he did, he did! Dencey—all of them, laughed breathlessly, as though the exertion were their own. Their hearts left them and danced, danced with MacHugh.

Then suddenly he stopped. Dencey tumbled to earth as if from out enormous spaces. He was laughing. Oh, so merry and rich and sweet, and saying, all out of breath:

"That's the way the lads do it in Starr, but it really should be danced over bare swords."

"But we couldn't stand it over bare swords," cried Tom. "I'm nearly dead with your exertions now. I was carried right along with you."

"Ye're a braw laddie," said Maclure, shaking him heartily by the hand.

"Robert Dale made me do it," laughed MacHugh.

"Hoot, lad! Ye needed nae makin'."

What about Lydia all this while? What a scene was this for a member of the Meeting in good and respectable standing? She longed to get away, but she was in the very front, with Ariel on her lap. She could not get up, pull the unwilling Ariel with her, disturb everybody. She lowered her eyes, yet found herself lifting them again to that whirling figure. Of course, dancing was wicked, but the young

man's face did not look wicked. It only looked merry.

She glanced toward Tom for help. Why, what had happened to Tom, gazing there at the dancer! Yes, his hair was just as gray as it had grown to be in that fateful cabin. But Tom was young again. Hope, ambition written in his face, and, oh, dear, she hadn't heard him laugh like that for so long—so long.

"I am growing irreligious," she thought confusedly. "I can't think about the dancing. I can only remember that Tom is happy."

Suddenly, in spite of everything, Lydia gathered Ariel in her arms and pushed her way out of the room. Ariel dared not protest when Mother had that look in her face.

As for Dencey, she dreamed that night that she and Jetsam were dancing the Sword Dance on the deck of a whaler in midocean. And somehow all the Islands of the Pacific belonged to them.

CHAPTER XXV

LORD OF THE ISLES AND EARL OF STARR

AFTER this incident Robert Dale and Captain MacHugh were little less than godlike in Dencey's eyes. In the first place they were old. Why, they must be twenty, both of them! It is not chance that such was the age always retained by the Greek Apollo.

But surely Robert Dale was the queerest Apollo ever held up to the imagination of young maid. Such a homely youth, short of stature, with broad forehead and broader cheek bones, and the small, twinkling, intensely blue eyes possessed by all the Owens. But the face was sensitive, full of imagination and force. Robert Dale believed in his father's dream with complete heart. This youth of twenty knew that he was going to New Harmony, and not only was a perfect town to be made there, but the

whole world was to be changed thereby. How could it be otherwise? When men saw New Harmony in its perfection of daily life would not everybody set about learning to be like it? Never was the ancient Jew more certain that all nations would run after his nation, clamoring for its light, than was this young Owenite certain of his father's town. It was the eternal dream come back again because it is eternal.

But if Robert Dale was homely, MacHugh left nothing to be desired. Black eyes, set deep, and flashing with youthful power, a dark Highland face, the very bloom of health, a kindly mouth, a shock of black curls, a head held high.

"But," said Dencey as she, Virginie, and Lucy paced arm in arm on the sunny deck of the *Philanthropist,* "he isn't just handsome. He's—well, he is somehow wonderful."

"Don't you know why?" demanded Virginie.

"Well, of course, he is good. And I know he is devoted to the 'Principles.' " (Dencey was fast becoming an "Owenite".)

"No, it isn't that." Virginie paused before the great announcement. "He is a lord, a lord in his own right. He doesn't like to talk about it because he's so generous and democratic and all that, but his title is Hugh MacHugh, Lord of the Isles and Earl of Starr."

"Earl of the stars!" laughed Dencey, thinking Virginie was making fun.

"No. I am in earnest. Starr is a beautiful island off the coast of Scotland, I looked it up on Madame Fretageot's map. And he's the lord of it and of a lot of other islands around. And that's the meaning of Lord of Isles and Earl of Starr."

Dencey might be democratic, but she could not resist such a romantic title as this.

"And just think," said Lucy, giving Dencey's arm a little squeeze. "He has left all his lands (of course he owns 'em yet) and his subjects to come here and help found Harmony, 'cause he thinks Mr. Owen has the secret of happiness for the whole world. And—oh, he's in love!"

"Hopelessly in love," echoed Virginie, "quite hopelessly."

This was at once a disappointment and an attraction. A beautiful youth struck by a hopeless love was certainly an object of compassion. Dencey turned her big inquiring eyes on Lucy.

"Yes." Lucy caught her breath. "When he and Robert Dale came over from Scotland, on the same ship was a beautiful distressed damsel. Her name was Maria Garcia. Isn't that a lovely name? And she's the most wonderful singer in the whole world. Thee's heard of 'the Malibran,' hasn't thee?"

No, Dencey was ashamed to admit that she didn't even know what that was.

"Well, that's what they call her now. 'The Malibran.' 'Cause now she has married a cruel man called that. New York has gone wild about her. She sings in that new thing they've started called 'the Opera.' But on the ship her father abused her. She wasn't married then. He made her practise till she dropped; and he hit her. And once she fainted in Robert Dale's arms. Robert Dale's almost as much in love with her as MacHugh, but not quite."

"And aren't they jealous?" demanded Dencey.

"No, not a bit. They admire each other too much. Besides, thee sees it's hopeless, 'cause she's married."

"But MacHugh's getting over it. Every day I can see that. He wouldn't have danced the Sword Dance if he hadn't been getting over it!"

All three agreed that the recovery was progressing.

How wonderful was this! Two young men hopelessly in love with the same maiden yet loving each other yet more. Such impossible things could happen on the *Boatload of Knowledge.*

Dencey was very sorry for MacHugh.

Ah, Jetsam, far away on the Pacific, look to your laurels. This charmer is very near.

CHAPTER XXVI

ADVENTURES BY THE WAY

NOT only did the romantic maidens admire the "Royalties," Robert Dale and MacHugh were the life of the whole party. When the boat made shore these two were the first to leap out. It was they who brought back the wild turkeys and squirrels for dinner; and once they shot a deer.

"But I am no such shot as the fair huntress here," said MacHugh with a bow to Dencey, who was quite overcome at such attention. "I have never brought down a panther."

They had the funniest stories to tell of the "native inhabitants" on shore.

At one place was a fat woman who was kept on hand as a standard of weight. "Exactly two hun-

dred pounds," laughed MacHugh. "You should see her mount one end of a long board while her man piles bags of corn and smoked hams on the other. Think how her husband could coin money by starving her."

Once they took a longer expedition than usual. They were on horseback.

"We were picking our way along over the 'republicans,' " said Robert Dale to the listening company at supper—" 'republicans,' you must know are the stumps in the road, those that are too stubborn to dig up—when suddenly we heard music.

" 'MacHugh,' I said, 'am I crazy or do I hear a violin playing?'

" 'I should call it a fiddle,' said MacHugh.

"We hurried forward, came to a stream swollen by the late rains. And there in the midst of the ford were a wagon and horse, completely swamped and slipping down stream in an alarming manner. And standing in the wagon was an amazing sight—a man fiddling away for dear life—you know that jerky whining sound they make out here—and the fiddle held against his breast bone.

"We rushed out with our horses and became his gallant rescuers." Robert Dale bowed to MacHugh.

"When we had set him ashore we demanded. 'Why did you not call out? You were in real danger.'

" 'Wall, ye see,' he answered us, 'Ef I'd call

mebbe sommun would come and mebbe not. But every man jack wud come runnin' to the sound o' Katy.' He touched his fiddle. 'They ain't nobody kin resist her. I'm Ole Pappy.'

"If he had been Paganini himself he couldn't have said it with more of an air."

At Louisville they took on a special pilot to get them over the Falls. Tom could not see why. The Falls, so-called, were so slight as hardly to be observed. But the following morning he saw why.

The *Boatload of Knowledge* caught her nose on a hidden snag. Instantly the long craft swung around broad side to the stream in a swift, unexpected current. She was narrow, of canoe-like shape, and rather topheavy. She tipped dangerously. If she went over there would be hardly a hope for life.

With a yell the two boatmen seized the extra sweeps and began to back water with them. Tom seized another, knowing as by instinct what to do. Slowly the *Philanthropist* righted. The snag loosened and went scraping under the keel. Then they floated free again.

Many a keel boat had tipped this way, with the loss of all on board and all the cargo.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE YOUNG FERRYMAN

THAT evening they tied up at Anderson's Ferry on the Indiana side. The whole world lay gentle under the sunset. Golden clouds hung in the west and lofty sprays of golden light. The trees on the farther shore were scarcely visible, hidden in lavender mist. But, strangely, every tree shone downward, distinct in the water. A sweet underworld of silence.

The men of the party, Maclure, Tom Coffyn, Say, Lesueur, plunged at once into the woods, "naturalizing." They were like children looking for the pot of gold. Was not the rainbow's end within reach? The amazing truth is that it was, and that the pot of gold was found by these men every day—the pure ecstasy of those new sciences. Sciences so new as scarcely to have a name.

Young MacHugh went dreaming along the river

bank. He wanted to catch the golden beauty and keep it forever. The river at Anderson's Ferry made a majestic bend which greatly increased its breadth. It seemed to steal along, hardly to flow. It might be some Highland lake of Scotland, which he loved so well.

Lucy Sistaire and Dencey were also romantic. They walked by themselves, arms entwined, exclaiming to each other about the scene. They passed the rude ferry. The ferryman was standing on the bank, a tall, gaunt fellow who seemed to be made of bones. At least, one thought of bones rather than flesh in looking at him. He might have been seventeen.

Just as the girls passed him Dencey's dress caught on a brier. Lucy and she tried to untangle it, but in vain. It only kept fastening in a new place. The young ferryman came up to them and helped them. His knuckly fingers went at the task with unexpected deftness. He soon had Dencey's dress free and untorn.

"You folks air havin' an elegant time," he remarked. "What all that company of fellers doin' in the woods thar without airy guns?"

"They're naturalizing," said Lucy with a toss of her pretty curls.

"What's that?"

"Oh, finding new flowers and insects and things.

Thomas Say discovered a new insect just yesterday. No one had ever described it before."

"Wall, now, I thought we all had diskivered all the bugs and skeeters an' varmints they was in these here parts. An' he found another. Think o' that. Ye ought to celebrate!"

"But they look at the rocks and guess how the world was made," put in Dencey. "And how the river got here—and, oh, everything."

The youth's face changed. An intense wistfulness came into his eyes, which touched Dencey deeply. He was suddenly her kin—not the mere raw, awkward, dumb-headed settler. Perhaps it was this quick human seeing of Dencey's that made the rough lads so easily fall in love with her.

"Who was that distinguished-lookin' man that passed up yander?" he asked.

"That's Lord Starr," said Dencey.

"A lord, say ye? Lord o' what?"

"His full name is Lord of the Isles and Earl of Starr."

The wistfulness vanished from the youth's face. His big mouth twitched with amusement.

"Wall, I swan, I allus wished I could see Paul o' Tarsus—or, why, even Stephen would ha' done, or that feller Theophilus that only gets one mention. An' now I've seen a lord. Think o' that."

"But he isn't just a lord," Dencey made eager de-

fence. "He's kind and brave and good. He left all his domains to come out to serve others. Besides, he can't help being a lord. He was born so. "

"Born so! Never thought o' that. Can't help it no more than he could cross eyes or a limp or——"

Lucy jerked Dencey's arm.

"Come along, he's only making fun of us."

At that moment the quartette of naturalists came out of the wood, all talking at once about something Tom Coffyn held in his hand.

The gaunt youth looked at them, and his face changed again. Dencey had not been mistaken in the heart hunger of that look.

"I'd ruther be one o' them naturalists," he said, "than all the rich lords that ever walked the yarth."

"Ho, there!" called a rough voice from the river edge. "You, Abe Lincoln, stop sparkin' the gals an' come an' ferry us acrost. D'ye s'pose we kin wait all night?"

CHAPTER XXVIII

DENCEY FINDS OUT WHY SHE CAME

THIS incident, so unimportant to Dencey, was quite overshadowed by another next day—the last of the voyage.

Lesueur, on every bright warm day, climbed to the roof of the cabin and sat, out of harm's way, sketching. Dencey longed to see what he was doing but never dared to climb up after him. But on this morning Dencey was up there herself when Lesueur came, sketchbook in hand. She knew it was rude, but she lingered. Saw him take out the beautiful cream-colored paper, the long sharpened pencils. Then he began! Such swift sure strokes—a grace in them that Dencey had never seen before. Before she knew it she was gazing over his shoulder.

Lesueur's drawing was not noted for ideal beauty, but he was correct, and clear, and absolutely sure of line. There under his hand grew the river bend, the distant hills, a flat boat they were passing, with father, mother, children, cow, and horse on board.

"All ze comforts of home," laughed Lesueur as he hastily sketched in the old grandmother sitting at her spinning wheel. He waved to them, and the flat boat family waved back with cheerful "Ho-la's."

"Oh," cried Dencey in ecstasy, "I think that is the most beautiful drawing I ever, ever saw!"

"What, mademoiselle—this poor sketch?"

He looked up into her face.

"*Mon Dieu,* do you love drawing so much?" he said. "You draw yourself?"

"No, no." This was not true, for Dencey had always covered every available scrap of paper with "her pictures" ever since that time when she drew the alphabet for Jetsam.

"Then you must begin." He hastily handed her a pad and pencil. "Begin, mademoiselle," he commanded. "Sit there on the deck."

Dencey was at first too confused and shy even to move her fingers; but soon the charm of the cream-colored French paper and the soft sharpened pencil won her. After she began, of course she forgot everything. She would never have had courage to

show her work, but Lesueur seized it as soon as it was done.

"Mon Dieu!" he said to himself, laughing. "You have no perspective. *La belle rivière* run up into the sky, but Zeke, ze boatman, *mon Dieu!* He is good."

Dencey had drawn the river, but she had also drawn, in the foreground, the stern of the *Philanthropist* and Zeke the boatman sitting at the sweep. Crude as it all was, Zeke was there, not in caricature, but the wise, weather-beaten old man, with the trials of the wilderness in his face, and his eyes squinted to the distant view—full of humor and tolerance.

"But it is a talent, a talent!" cried the enthusiastic Frenchman. He reached the fluttering paper down to Robert Owen, who sat on the deck below, explaining to Lydia the "vices and virtues of the human species."

Owen always took fire at the instruction of youth.

"Fine—fine!" he said now. "Miss Coffyn must be your pupil. You must begin to teach her as soon as we reach Harmony."

"Tut-tut, I shall teach her *à présent.*" And Lesueur began to show Dencey the rules and lines of perspective.

That whole morning passed for Dencey in a flash of time. These forms of life growing under the hand, these secrets by which she could make

things more alive and real, it was to her like a draft of water after long thirst—a thirst she had not realized but which had always been there.

"And may I make colored pictures too? May I paint?" she asked.

"Ah, that is far away. Mooch work first and drawing—drawing. Only still life, *ma chère,* squares, cubes, balls, a glass of water."

"I'll draw anything—brooms and kettles," cried Dencey—"just so I can learn. I would have come all the way to Harmony just for that."

Lesueur looked into her face, which had changed so suddenly.

"I scarcely know you," he said. "What a *belle demoiselle* you are!"

The river had grown broad now, the banks flat and less picturesque. It was uninteresting. They passed Evansville, Indiana, a group of thirty log houses. They came in midmorning to Mount Vernon.

"My dear friends," said Owen, "I must leave you here. I cannot wait. This boat must go a number of miles to the mouth of the Wabash; and then the progress up that stream to New Harmony will be slow indeed. Here I can go across country in a day. I will leave you and be in New Harmony to greet you."

In his face was a fine impatience for his beloved Community. He was flushed, and his eyes were shining. MacHugh and Robert Dale shared his impatience. Tom also was eager to get to New Harmony and wished to go across country.

Ariel, however, was far from strong yet. Lydia dreaded the journey over the rough roads.

"Thee and Dencey had better go," she said to Tom. "Both together can prepare a house for us."

How strange that sounded—their new home at last.

So after much waiting they procured a wagon, put the Coffyn chest and a trunk in it for seats, and with a "native driver," as MacHugh called him, started. MacHugh and Robert Dale had walked ahead by themselves.

The voyage of the *Boatload of Knowledge* was ended.

CHAPTER XXIX

JOURNEY'S END

THE wagon began its slow progress over the "corduroys" and the "republicans." The gloom of the winter trees closed about them. In spite of the rough way, Robert Owen talked eagerly to Tom, the words sometimes being fairly bumped out of him.

"Can't you see how this new system of living strikes at the roots of greed and thieving. All property is to be had in common—the wealth of all persons at once. Man will have no fear of poverty or distress. Why should he steal?"

He paused while the wagon banged up and over a two-foot stump. Then began again.

"How unkind, after all, is barter—the getting for

less and selling for more. Every such transaction is fundamentally a cheat. That habitual unkindness will be done away with in New Harmony."

"But," said Tom politely, "won't people be lazy? What incentive is there to work?"

"The incentive of the common good, which will become more and more apparent to the common man. Also, the work itself. Every man shall choose the work he loves best and do it enthusiastically. The workmen in my New Lanark were completely changed. And there I only partly tried the System."

Dencey paid little attention to the talk. The reentrance into the woods depressed her. The memory of the terrible cabin and its illness stole over her like miasma. Now they were passing just such a clearing—stumps everywhere, and the dead trees rolled to the edge. The cabin had a coonskin stretched on it to dry. The yard was strewn with wild turkey feathers. A little farther on they came to the owner of the cabin. He was sitting on a log, shaking terribly: his head, his shoulders, every limb a-shake. His gun in his hands rattled; even his feet rattled in the dry leaves.

"Hello, Sol!" called out the driver. "What ye doin'?"

"I'm waitin' f-fur th-this ager s-shake to pass so's I kin sh-shoot a squirrel fur supper."

The driver got leisurely down.

"Hyar, gimme the rifle. That thar shakin' ain't going to stop, an' ye know it."

He went off into the timber. Presently a report, and he came back with a 'possum.

"This ull do, I reckon," he said.

"But isn't the man dying?" queried Owen.

"Not a bit of it," laughed the driver. "This is his chill day, that's all. To-morrer he'll be all right and next day git it again. Ye kin tell the day o' the week by yer shakes."

Dencey's heart went down farther yet. Was she, after all, to live in the woods with these people? Was not New Harmony like the other little log settlements they had passed—a mere gash in the vast interminable forest, locked away?

How free and far away seemed her beloved Nantucket. The blue sea was an open door to the world. That door was closed—closed forever. She began to long for the sea with an actual pain in her heart. For its azure, its breadth, its aliveness. Scenes in Nantucket town flashed across her mind, vivid as actual touch: A cosy crooked street with its gray gables and gardens. Aunt Lovesta's home! Her throat closed convulsively, and she bowed her head. Tom was too interested in Owen's talk to notice her. They covered the slow miles.

Suddenly Owen's warm hand was over hers.

"We are almost there," he said. "Remember, my

dear young lady, we older folk, your father and I, reap only half harvest of this new life. Upon you it will come with full richness. You will grow up among these generosities and kindnesses. You will be taught, not dry rules, but the actual things of life, so interesting that you will hasten to school as to a banquet. You love painting, I understand. You shall learn that, and what work will you choose to do for Harmony?"

Dencey roused herself out of her dream. "I don't know," she said. "I—I used to teach the little scholars at Nantucket."

"Then you shall do that. It is the most sacred trust in the whole Community. But I have noticed you, during the journey, with your little brother—a fine devotion and understanding. You will do well with our little ones. I would not give the work to everyone."

Dencey looked into his face. His eyes were crinkled up with that shiny smile of his. Pure love, the passion of his life since he was fourteen years old.

"We are coming to it," he said. His voice had a strange ring. "At the top of this hill we shall see New Harmony."

They were at the crest.

There it was! The little town nestling in its sunny valley by the Wabash. Large generous roofs reared

themselves among the evenly planted trees, a dome covered with red tiles, the spire of a church, and ever so many smaller roofs. Neat as a paper of pins.

Oh, Harmony was like this. Beautiful, clean, livable! Dencey's heart rose to the surface like a bubble.

"This is to be your home," said Robert Owen, with rich kindness.

CHAPTER XXX

NEW HARMONY

THEY rattled into the street of the village. Suddenly there was a burst of music, high merry voices. And out of a lane trooped a band of school children, more than a hundred, singing the school hymn:

"Awake ye sons of light and joy
And scout the Demon of the schools
The fiend that scowls but to decoy,
To pamper zealots, frighten fools—

"Away with studied form and phrase
Away with cant and bigot zeal
Let Truth's unclouded beacon blaze,
From Nature's kindness learn to feel
From Nature's kindness learn to give . . ."

And ever and again with a special shout the chorus:

> "Wake up! 'Tis deeds alone can tell
> That you with Peace and Virtue dwell."

They certainly seemed like sons of light and joy as they surrounded the wagon, rosy girls and boys, smiling up at Mr. Owen, waving their arms aloft.

It was so unexpected that Dencey felt the excitement rising in her. She wanted to sing. She wanted to shout with them. She wanted to cry. Sitting there in the wagon the quiet Quaker figure looked down at them. And how Owen beamed! He was a very figure of happiness.

Then through the ranks of the children pushed, in haste, a tall young man, climbed the wagon wheel while it was going, threw both arms about Mr. Owen, and kissed him.

"Father, Father! My gracious, I'm glad to see you. I was never so glad in my life."

"William!" Owen did not say, "God bless you," because that was against the "Principles." But he certainly looked it.

"My dear boy, I left you longer than I meant."

"Thank goodness, you're in charge now—not me!" said William, with a long breath and a shake of his shoulders to free them of the load.

This youth of nineteen had been in sole charge of the Community for nine months.

They came to the Tavern. Mr. Owen got out and was immediately surrounded by eager friends. He shook hands with each, but even in the excitement did not forget the introductions of Tom and Dencey. The Steeple House bells began to ring loud, joyous, as though they were speaking out the heart of the town. Robert Owen raised his voice.

"Mr. Coffyn, this is Mr. Pelham, the editor of our *Gazette*. This, Mr. Neef, who is in charge of the younger school. Madame Neef—Mr. and Mrs. Chappelsmith . . ."

What interesting-looking people they were. How keen, and above all how happy! Robert Dale and MacHugh came running out of the Tavern. It was they who had taken horse, after all, hurried ahead, and told the news.

Amid the jubilation Owen turned and dragged his great portmanteau from the wagon, his bundle of shawls, his bag.

"Wait, Father, wait!" cried William. "You're not going to put up there. There's a room for you in the Mansion."

William swung them back, his father dragged them out of the wagon again, utterly unaware that he had done so before.

"Yes—yes," he was telling Mr. Pelham. "I'll speak at the Great Hall. You may announce it."

William tried the bags again, with the same result—looked up at Dencey, shaking his head with a quizzical smile that made him at once a friend.

And still the Steeple House bells rang and clanged, telling the news to the town and surrounding farms. The whole population were running out of their houses and up the streets. The town went wild with joy.

Tom and Dencey, standing in the road, suddenly felt lost. Where were they to go? What to do next?

William came to them.

"You are to have the first house beyond the garden," he said. "Miss Wright is living there, too. But we have to crowd you just now. You won't mind."

Dencey and Tom, as in a dream, followed the directions he gave them, crossed the open square with its high locust trees, went through a turnstile into the next street (for the streets, not the houses, were fenced off), passed the so-called Mansion and garden, and came to a pretty brick house set flush with the sidewalk—though sidewalk, save a path, there was none.

"I suppose this is it," said Tom doubtfully. "It certainly does seem strange to take over a house as you would pick a wild flower."

They pushed open the door, which was ajar. The room was empty of furniture and littered by the last occupant. The whole thing was perfectly casual.

Dencey looked about: at the tiny paned windows, giving upon the street, the open fireplace, the room glimpsed beyond, the stairway.

Suddenly she threw both arms about her father.

"It's home," she breathed—"real, real home. I never thought we'd have one again."

In the early twilight Tom and Dencey joined the eager crowd hurrying to the Great Hall. The whole place was animated with a youthful upbeating spirit. Dencey could not express it, but she felt keenly (in a fashion that affected her whole after view of life) how a town is made not of people and houses but of hopes; of the purposes, the intentions, the determinations and imaginations of the people who live there. At least, Harmony was so made.

The Hall could easily seat a thousand people, but it was soon crowded. A motley throng, educators from France and England, English farmers, dreamers of ideals from New England and the South, and many backwoodsmen. One of these sat on the platform, his back to the speaker, swinging his legs and chewing tobacco.

Owen mounted the platform. The crowd began to cheer noisily.

He did not try to speak at once. He seemed to be summing up his flock, which had come to him out of the unfriendly world. Tom suddenly realized that this was Robert Owen's first view of his Community. He had left New Harmony last spring, a Rappite town newly bought by him. Meanwhile the Rappites had departed and these folk had come at his call. They were his own.

Then he began his long speech. It was all so new to Dencey that she did not understand very much of it. She did understand the propositions of Robert Owen, for they were clearly stated, but their far political and industrial significance were closed to her. How could she know the bitter conditions these propositions were meant to correct?—conditions that Robert Owen had seen in Europe and foresaw in America.

She heard, "Equality of rights. Poor and rich with rights alike." But there were to be no poor nor rich. For all the property was to be in common. Women too were to have equal rights. Girls were to learn whatever they liked best, regardless of their being girls. This gave Dencey her first thrill.

And all were to tell the truth. There would be no

necessity to tell anything else. Everybody was to express himself fully without fear of criticism or loss.

"This in itself will make for happiness," he said.

Every man, woman, and child must have some menial duty each day for the benefit of all.

"This too will make for happiness."

He told them of the schools, free to all (this was new in those days), of a boat coming up the Wabash "which contained more learning than was ever contained in any boat!"

Of course, this was boasting, but such loving and generous boasting! The crowd burst into wild applause.

"My friends," Robert Owen said, "never think that what you are doing here is for the benefit of this little town only. The whole world will change by what you are doing. You will become serene, happy, clean physically, clean mentally and morally. Free to do the highest that is in you. This the world will see and will swiftly imitate. You, my friends, stand in the arena. All the world is looking upon you, sneering, applauding, watching. Yours is a sacred charge. The fate of all the world and all history hangs upon what you do."

Dencey glowed with a sudden sense of privilege and humility. What was she to be placed in the midst of this noble contest? And Robert Owen had

said her duty was important. She must try, try, try. She wished she understood it better.

Many of the ignorant people were silent, but the group in which Tom and Dencey sat were applauding wildly. Dencey caught the communal joy.

She hardly heard Robert Owen's closing words.

"Truth has passed from me beyond recall. It has passed into your minds. It will be heard throughout America and thence will pass east, north, south, and west."

Then the talking, wondering crowds came out into the cold, clear night.

Dencey and her father crossed the street to their new home.

Here Tom slept on the bare floor. Dencey, too, on the floor of a room upstairs, but on a feather bed which they had fortunately brought in the wagon.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE GRAND TOUR

THE next day was a busy one for Tom and Dencey. Dencey had to clean the house from top to bottom with mop and cloths she borrowed from Madame Neef. Tom had to scour the country for planks to construct bedsteads; had to take his ax into the forest and chop wood; afterward, with great difficulty, get it hauled. The house must be ready for Lydia and the children.

Dencey, her head bound up in a dust cap and wearing her linsey-woolsey, was sweeping the parlor floor when suddenly the room darkened. She looked up to see the Lord of Starr, smiling, handsome, amused, his elbows on the little open window.

Such was the ease with which one could gossip from the street.

"Good-morning, fair Communist," he said. "If all our members work like this we'll have a perfect community in no time. Have you seen the town?"

Dencey started, trying to push back her cap.

"No. I haven't had time."

"Then take time. Everybody else is doing the grand tour, so why not you?"

"The grand tour?"

"Yes, seeing the wonders of New Harmony. Come, I'll show you them all."

"I—I ought to get my work done."

"You can get it done anyway. Do come." Was there any resisting an invitation like this? So urgent and so kind!

Dencey dashed upstairs to change her dress, down again to wash her face at the well, up again for her bonnet. In a few moments she was ready, breathless and flushed as a rose.

"First you must see our garden," said MacHugh, "and the blooming flowers."

"Flowers in January?"

He laughed at her amazement. "Yes, Harmony is the place of wonders."

He led her to the garden next door. Here was a log cabin with glass windows the entire length of it. The floor was earth, and here grew a fig tree with large heavy leaves, a lemon tree in bloom, an

orange tree with both fruit and blooms and many roses.

"In the summer," said MacHugh, "the log house moves back on rollers to that space yonder. Then the flowers are in the open air. I saw them when I was here before with Mr. Owen."

Dencey was delighted with interest, the interest which lightens and sparkles when a handsome young man is the instructor. Why was he taking her out? The question kept insisting itself into her thoughts as she gayly laughed and talked. Only because Virginie and Lucy were not here. When they came she would get no attention at all. But the fact remained that at present he was making himself extremely agreeable.

He led her on farther, to the Mansion yard.

"Now, Miss Coffyn, prepare to be amazed. You are to behold the footsteps of an angel."

He showed her a large flagstone where, sure enough, were the imprints as if in soft sand of two feet, larger than life; also a curious scroll as though drawn by a finger.

"That's angel writing," explained MacHugh seriously. "And, of course, the footprints must be an angel's because they are not continuous. The Angel Gabriel just alighted." He made a sweeping gesture, "and made off into heaven."

"But what is it really?" laughed Dencey.

"An angel, I tell you, an angel," he asserted. He did not reveal to her the story, which the simple Rappites had believed, that the Angel Gabriel had alighted on the stone and commanded them to build a church, the result of which was the Great Hall where Dencey had been last night.

They entered the Mansion House. Here all was confusion: folks moving out to make room for Maclure and the other teachers of the *Boatload of Knowledge.*

"This is to be the older school—Maclure's and Madame Fretageot's. You will, no doubt, attend here. Oh, Pelham, it's too bad, your having to vacate."

He addressed a slender, fine-looking man who was trying to carry a heavy table all by himself.

"Not too bad at all," returned Pelham. "Do you suppose I would complain at something that is to give the Community its greatest impulse? Think what it will be when those scientists come and begin work. And I'm perfectly comfortable over the *Gazette* office and right with my work."

"Well, anyway, let me help you." And the Lord of Starr took one end of the table to carry down the street, leaving Dencey to wander through the great rooms and question how each would be used.

"Isn't it wonderful," said Dencey as a few moments later they crossed the street together, "how

warm it is. I can't believe it is January. In Nantucket now they're all huddled in the houses, away from the wind and snow."

"Yes, and in my island of Starr it is cold, with heavy gales."

Dencey turned to him a shining face.

"You come from an island too!"

"Yes, indeed—the dearest isle on earth."

"No, no, Nantucket is the dearest!"

So the two islanders had a fine contest.

There was a sudden clatter and singing, and out of the large building they were entering marched the schoolboys in military order. Joseph Neef, at their head, sang a rousing French song, a sonorous bass. The boys had axes and saws. All were as happy as crickets to be out in the sunshine and waved to MacHugh, whom they seemed to know.

"Make us good fences, boys," he called. "We need them badly."

So the boys went to their Community work.

In the building they met Madame Neef at her task of teaching French.

"And iss this the Mademoiselle Coffyn who is to help me?" she asked. "Monsieur Owen tell me. Could you possible begin to-day? We so much need the assistance."

"Not to-day. I have to get the house ready for Mother. But," Dencey added eagerly, "to-morrow

I'll begin. I want to take my part here just as soon as ever I can."

"There spake a true Communist," said MacHugh. "And I understand your father is to help by being carpenter."

"Yes, Father can do that. He learned the trade of ship carpenter. All boys in Nantucket have to learn a trade."

"And the *girls* of Nantucket?" queried MacHugh swiftly.

"Oh, we just worked at home!"

"Just worked," he laughed. "At what?"

(Gracious, how handsome he looked when he laughed like that!)

"Weaving, spinning," she answered. "I can weave beautiful blankets. I really can."

"There you are!" he exclaimed. "Exquisite skilled work, but because women do it, it is not even counted a trade. It is really an art—weaving. Miss Coffyn, not until I met Mr. Owen did I sense these blindnesses of ours. We have much yet to learn. But our Harmony will revolutionize industry if it does nothing else."

Oh, delightful, this! To be talked to as though she were quite wise in the broad questions of the world.

When Henry Moore in far away Connecticut had begun his sentimental talk Dencey was at once

on her guard for Jetsam's sake. She was not on guard now, with this dignified, deferential, kindly, and extremely handsome man.

Yet the whole experience was carrying her farther from Jetsam than a dozen such Henrys could carry her.

CHAPTER XXXII

A CHARMING COMMUNIST

THAT evening Tom had already constructed two bedsteads, had gathered a lot of firewood, mostly green, but had added enough dry leaves to make a roaring fire. He and Dencey sat in front of this, drowsing from their labors. The warm day had turned into a cold evening, with promise of snow.

"Thy mother will be here by to-morrow," said Tom happily.

Just then Frances Wright, who had the room upstairs, entered.

"Won't thee join us?" Tom invited her.

"Oh, may I? I've been nearly frozen in my room. Some evenings I've sat by the Tavern fire with the men, but that is being criticized."

"I haven't a chair, but I've brought in these sections of logs."

"Excellent," she said. "Excellent chairs."

Dencey liked her at once because she was beautiful. Beauty was a distinct virtue in Dencey's eyes. Moreover, she was different from anyone Dencey had ever seen, dressed in a slim gown of Madonna blue—a Paris gown, by the way—curly hair cut short (unheard of for a woman!), and most expressive gray eyes.

The Paris gown sat down on the section of log, and Miss Wright held her slender hands to the blaze. Her hands were trembling.

"I have been so angry," she said. "I was never so angry in my life."

Dencey and Tom looked interested.

"There is a man from Louisiana at the Tavern. He has just bought two Negroes in Kentucky. One is a young girl. He is taking them down to Louisiana. The poor girl is terrified. You know going 'down river' is what they most dread. She quivered with sobs when I put my arms around her. She is broken-hearted at separating from her mother and her husband. Yes—yes, her husband." Frances Wright spoke with an emphatic nod of her head. "Even though the slaveholders do not count that such can have husbands. She's almost white and hardly older than your daughter here." Miss

Wright's wonderful eyes were swimming with tears.

"I have offered the man a large price for the girl. Half again the usual price. But he won't sell. The brute—the brute! He has grown fond of her. But Robert Dale says he will help me. We'll offer twice her worth—three times. We must save her. We must—I'll give her her freedom."

Of course Tom and Dencey were deeply touched. Tom even offered some money out of his little store.

"No—no, you must not do that. We will find enough, Robert Dale and I, if the man does not get stubborn. I told him just what I thought of him. I fear he is angry."

Tom considered it would probably have been better for the mulatto girl if Miss Wright had not so fully expressed herself. She was so upwrought as to be practically ill.

"Can't I make thee some tea?" said Dencey timidly. "We brought some, and have our teapot."

It took but a few moments to get water from the well, a bit of cream from the Mansion House. Soon Miss Wright was drinking the hot tea from the only cup in the house.

"But it's real tea—the way we make it in England," she said happily.

"It's the way we make it in Nantucket," responded Dencey.

They drank in turn from the one cup.

"Suppose," said Miss Wright suddenly, "I should read to you a little. Would you mind? It would quiet me for the night."

At their consent she ran upstairs and brought down a small leather-covered volume.

"*As You Like It*," she said. Don't you think that is suitable for us here? 'No foes but winter and rough weather'—and ancient prejudices," she added.

She began to read in her rich, marvelous voice—a voice already famous in all the then cities of the United States. She was an impassioned public speaker.

As You Like It! Imagine it, a brand-new play. No telling how it would turn out. Miss Wright glanced up and caught Dencey's wide gazing eyes. After that she read with yet more fire and acted the parts with small telling gestures. Rosalind, the unconquerable spirit, the cruel Duke, the adorable Touchstone, Orlando, the sweetest lover of all romance, tacking up his execrable poems on the trees and following, following through the forest of Arden.

Never did it occur to Dencey that this was a *stage play,* forbidden by Aunt Susanna and her kind, of Quaker Meeting. Nothing occurred to her but the ecstasy of the story.

Miss Wright read the whole of the play. Then discussed Shakespeare, education, science versus religion, and the Constitution of the United States. It was twelve o'clock before she at last took her way upstairs. In this one evening Dencey had traveled farther from Nantucket than in all her wilderness journeying.

CHAPTER XXXIII

"COMMUNITY DAYS"

NEXT day the *Boatload of Knowledge* arrived. All the inhabitants trooped down the levee to the river landing. What a welcome! In half an hour all Harmony was changed. The *Boatload of Knowledge* was all over the place. Where before had been a preponderance of ignorant backwoodsmen and doubting settlers was now a preponderance of genius. Cultivated, alert persons walked in every street, for of course everybody had to see everything forthwith. One heard French, Hollandish, German—a jargon of tongues—but in every tongue was said, "Isn't it wonderful?" "A beautiful town." "Certain success." "Happiness for all the world."

A banquet was held for them in the Mansion House, six wild turkeys roasted, haunches of venison, even 'possum (just to taste the queer American food), and bread cooked by Madame Neef at the school.

As for Tom and Dencey, they had the joy of meeting Lydia and the children and of bringing them to the new home. Lydia was quite speechless as she came to the cosy, roaring fireplace, seeing the little house which Dencey had made so shiny clean, the rough cradle made by Tom to lay Sally in, tiny Sally, who had traveled so far. It was all too good to be believed.

Ariel climbed down by himself from the chair they sat him in and walked tottering to the fire.

"I like this house," he said. "It's our own house."

"Mustn't say that, Son," said Tom, kissing him. "Here everything belongs to everybody."

But Ariel looked so crestfallen that Tom quickly reassured him. They were almost too tender over Ariel just now.

As they sat there, suddenly the front door opened. Miss Wright came in. She did not speak to them, but ran swiftly up the stair. They could hear her stifled sobbing as she went. Lydia looked to Tom in alarm.

"It is Miss Wright," he explained. "The young lady who has a room in this house. She has been

trying to buy a slave, to set her free. I fear she has failed."

"But would she be so upset about it?"

"Yes," said Dencey. "She was almost crying yesterday. She seems to care about it like anything."

Tom then told the story more at length.

"I shall go up to see her," said Lydia.

She knocked at the door and, receiving no answer, quietly opened it. Miss Wright sat at her desk, her head bowed upon her arms and shaking with sobs. Lydia came and touched her shoulder.

"Tell me thy trouble," she said. She could not believe that an impersonal matter could create such emotion.

Miss Wright looked up. "Oh, you are Mrs. Coffyn—I am sorry I disturbed you, but—but——"

"Is it about the slave?"

"Yes—yes." Her tears flowed again. "The cruel, cruel man has taken her away—she will never see her mother or her husband again. She was terrified—broken! She clung to me like a child, and he came and pulled her away. He would not sell her—not at any price. Oh, price, price, price, for a human soul! How cruel it is even to use the word!"

She jumped up from her chair, clasping her hands above her head.

"I would give my life to save her!"

"Yes," said Lydia in her even voice. "A life is not too much to give in such a cause."

"You feel that? You believe that too?" cried Miss Wright.

"I feel it more deeply than I can tell thee," Lydia answered.

Miss Wright threw both arms about her.

"Oh, you understand? You do not think me foolish?"

"Thee is foolish to give way to tears. That does no good. And this is not thy battle alone nor mine. It is the Lord's cause and must prosper."

"But I think I have a way to save them. It came to me suddenly when I was talking with the poor girl." Miss Wright began to talk very fast and clear, her hands upon Lydia's shoulders. "It is this: I shall buy a farm in the South and put slaves upon it. I'll let each work out his freedom; then with the income from the farm I'll buy more slaves and free those—keep on freeing them until all are free. You do not think that is foolish? You will not discourage me?"

"Discourage thee? Indeed I will not. It is a God-given plan. I will help thee with prayers and in every way I can."

Lydia's face began to glow with a fervor as unlike Miss Wright's headlong enthusiasm as possible, but the fires were one.

They talked until Dencey called her mother to tea.

"Now thee come down and sup with us," said Lydia to her new friend. "Do not let thy heart doubt again. It is doubt that shakes thee, not love. Thee cannot fail."

Tom, who had had some misgiving as to Lydia's acceptance of this unusual person, was astonished to see them come downstairs with a look of established friendship. And from that moment Lydia was Frances Wright's friend. Throughout her difficult and sometimes erratic career, throughout the long trial of the slave-freeing farm which Miss Wright did buy—and gave almost her life for the experiment—throughout her public speaking and resultant criticism, Lydia stayed loyal to one whom she recognized as one of the fine workers in the world.

So Harmony began. New town, new life, new everything! For weeks it seemed to Dencey like a constant holiday. There were the lessons with Lesueur, revealing so much. Her skill grew every day, or she thought it did. There were the long sketching walks of the pupils, which as spring advanced they took every day, creating a multitude of quaint pictures of the village which are yet

the treasures of Harmony. There was Dencey's duty in the primary school under Madame Neef—the pride of taking her part in the great community experiment, too great for her to understand. She even at times took Wilhelmina Neef's classes, and under her direction taught in the new Peztalozzian Method, which made the children love their school instead of hating it.

Sometimes she slept in the little girls' dormitory to care for them. She had a hanging bed like the rest. They were newly invented, these hanging beds. Harmony was full of "just invented" things. As soon as all was still some mischievous wight was sure to swing her bed-hammock. Then, bump! she came against the next one. Dencey would hear the bump-bump going down the line till the last one, of course, was bumped down and out. Then Dencey had to spring up and comfort the bruised head.

There was the excitement of herself entering the new school under Madame Fretageot's teaching. This was inspiring and enthusiastic. Madame Fretageot seemed to consider it a kind of beautiful triumph (hers too) when they advanced and understood. In the parlor of the school was a large circular mahogany table, and on it were piles and piles of pictures—beautiful copper prints from France, brilliant paintings on paper from Italy.

Things that would be priceless treasures now. The scholars were invited to linger there to finger and look at those freely at their leisure.

"They must do it of their own will," said Maclure, who was head of the school. "Then they will truly learn."

Of their own will! It was all Dencey could do to tear herself away from them after hours of contemplation. She seemed to be drinking deep of some water of life which was heretofore unknown.

Then there was the sheer fun in the town. Robert Owen believed in fun for young people. How he smiled at them when he met the merry laughing groups on the street. Virginie and Lucy were Dencey's special friends. MacHugh, just as she expected, paid them more attention than he did her. But there were other young men, Victor Neef, Victor Dupalais, Amadie Dufour from Paris, and Robert Dale and William Owen. Later came David Dale and Richard, younger sons, who were Dencey's age.

Then what moonlight rides on the Wabash, what walks over the hills, what riding parties when perhaps twenty horses started out with twenty riders together. No wonder that all their lives, even into old age, the faces of these folk would shine when they spoke of "Community Days."

There was no money in Harmony. Money, to the

smallest coin of it, was anathema. Dencey, when she wanted to buy anything, took her labor note to the store. This was a carefully dated note which said:

DENCEY COFFYN HAS LABORED ONE HOUR
FOR THE COMMUNITY OF NEW HARMONY

And signed by the authorities.

This was the coin of the realm, untransferable. With what a sense of independence Dencey bought a book, dress, flour, or plaited hat and carried it to their home! Her own, through the right of work. She was part of the Community indeed.

CHAPTER XXXIV

TO DANCE OR NOT TO DANCE

EVERY week there were three events—a lecture on geology by Maclure, David Dale, Owen, or some visiting scientist, a meeting to discuss the Principles—and a ball. This last quickly became the most important of all. Everybody went. Mothers brought their babies, fathers their sons. A circle was drawn in the middle of the ballroom, where the little ones might dance unbumped and undisturbed by their elders. The church bell rang for this at five o'clock, at six it began, at ten all was over.

It was the horror of the countryside!

How Dencey longed to go to these! But she could not dance. And, with her unbroken line of Quaker

ancestry, it seemed to her she never could. But, oh, if she could just try. At this, however, Lydia drew the line.

"If thee expects to stay in Friends Meeting thee cannot disobey the Discipline," she said.

"But, Mother, there isn't any Friends Meeting here."

"What does thee call the Silent Meeting we have here at home?" Lydia asked. For the Coffyns, the Prices, and a few other Quakers who had come to Harmony had their silent meeting in the midst of the new world turmoil.

"Yes, that is meeting," Dencey conceded. "And, Mother, I really like it lots better than the big meeting in Nantucket. But I like dancing too. Mr. Owen says it's necessary to young folks."

"If the things of the spirit are to grow we must give them ground for growth. Such frolicking is not good ground. I do not want thee to go, nor does thy father."

Dencey felt herself grown up now. But young ladies were expected to obey their parents. And, besides, she loved them too well to disregard an express command. So when the others went to the Great Hall to dance she sat at home reading to Ariel, hearing from across the street the merry music of violins, 'cellos, and flutes and the gay laughter that so often rang out.

She would have kept along quite steadily if it had not been for young Richard Owen. Richard was the especial dancing teacher of the Community. He took this duty seriously.

"Miss Dencey," he said, meeting her one day in the school parlor by the table of pictures. "Why were you not at the ball last night? Or, indeed, any balls? I miss you, and I heard MacHugh and others wishing you were there."

Dencey blushed scarlet. She could not say, "My parents think it wicked to dance." Why, that would be an insult.

"I cannot dance," she said.

"Cannot? What a shame. I don't see why I did not ask you before. Of course, I'll teach you."

"But—but I can't learn. I'm stupid."

"Stupid? Nothing of the kind. Any young lady who can ride horseback as you do can dance. You walk especially gracefully—Miss Dencey, excuse me—but I have noticed it."

"Oh, Mr. Richard, I'm quite sure I cannot dance." (She should tell him now. The truth. This was lying, and Dencey knew it!)

"Come, come. What hour shall we name? Private lessons, so you need not be embarrassed. I'll teach you until you do learn. How about four o'clock to-morrow?"

"I take the children walking then."

"Then two o'clock—three. I insist."

"I have nothing at two," said Dencey faintly.

"Then I expect you at two."

Dencey went home in a turmoil of thoughts. What had she done? Richard Owen considered that she had consented, but she had not. She could never go to the balls. It was useless to ask her mother again. But, oh, she did want to go.

And Richard Owen was so kind, so innocent of doing any wrong in this thing. She could not insult him. Was not the expressed wish of an Owen equal to a command? But she'd have to tell him.

Next day Dencey had to go on an errand to the store. She would find Richard before she went home and tell him fully. But she ran across Richard at the corner.

"Miss Dencey, I am so glad I met you. Have you anything to do at this moment?"

"Only to take the meat home to Mother."

"Then I'll go with you and wait at the gate. I'll have to give the lesson now. May I carry your bundle?"

Now was the time! He was smiling at her—his big, homely face and rosy cheeks—so pleased at this bit of enterprise. And all the while the wish to dance was tugging at her heels. Before Dencey knew it she was standing in the dancing room in front of Richard trying to do what he said.

At the end of the lesson he appointed next day for another.

"What nonsense!" he said. "How could you think yourself stupid at dancing? You are unusually quick. It is a real pleasure to teach you."

After the first downward step, the next and the next came easier, each such step being a lesson; and the dancing itself was a hundred times more delightful than she had imagined. When Richard swung her through the steps of the reel and cotillion it was like flying. This only with Richard's breathless singing. What would it be with real music? Richard insisted on plenty of lessons.

"We'll give them a great surprise," he said.

Then came the ball! Of course, that was the consequence of all the lessons. But she had not consented to the ball yet. She must not—could not. That would not only be disobeying Father and Mother. She would disobey the Meeting—that Discipline by which her people had lived two hundred years.

It was like the old painful struggles about Jetsam, going out on to the Commons to teach him, only that disobedience was for the good of someone else. This was just for her own pleasure. Surely she could not dance in the Quaker garb. That would be sacrilege. She went to Madame Neef and borrowed an embroidered kerchief. She took off

her cap. Well, that must do. She was ready. Trembling, she went out the door and across the street to the Great Hall.

Dencey could not have done this if it had not been that every other young person in the town was dancing that night. This was not a Quaker community with the sternness of Quakerism pervading it. No other parents but hers disapproved. And she did not agree with them.

It was still daylight, a saffron sunset pouring into all the windows and drowning the candles to little twinkles. As she came timidly in the door Richard ran and took her hand. He turned to all the company.

"Friends, Romans, Countrymen," he declaimed. "Lend me your ears. Let me introduce you to the new danseuse, Miss Dionis Coffyn! A new member for our balls."

Lucy came hurrying.

"What does he mean? You don't know how to dance."

"Doesn't she though! Wait till you see her."

"What does Richard mean?" "Can you really dance?" "Are you coming to the balls now?"

The young friends came crowding around, making a great excitement of this small matter, greeting her as if she were a stranger.

"I'll wager Richard taught you," exclaimed

MacHugh. "The sly fox, as if a lot of the rest of us wouldn't have done it. Give me the first dance."

"No—no, that is mine," said Richard, "the price of dancing lessons."

"Give me the second then."

Dencey was so confused she could not answer. Virginie kissed her, saying:

"It's been perfectly horrid—you being out of it all the while. The only one, when just *everybody* comes."

Then the music struck up, swift, tingling, rhythmic. Not across the street, as it had always been, but close, loud, insistent. They were standing up. She seemed standing within the music as if it were some bright mist. Richard called the figure and swung her out between the rows. The ball had begun.

After this Dencey knew nothing but a daze of laughter and joy. Now bowing deep in the minuet, now swinging in the Pendulum, now prancing through the rougher measures of the Irish Washwoman. Now weaving the complicated figure of the New Social System.

"You are as graceful as a willow," said the poetic Robert Dale, swinging her about as he came up the line.

How warm the activity made her. How full of life. The young girl of that day, sedate in all her

ways, found dancing a wonderful outlet. She was skipping swiftly with MacHugh under an arch of uplifted arms when she met face to face—a dancer that made her turn to stone.

Her father! Tom Coffyn, no less!

Both their faces went blank with amazement. They almost blocked the dance before they remembered where they were. As soon as the dance was over Tom came hurrying to her.

"Well, Daughter," he said. "Kicked over the traces, did thee!"

"Father, however did thee come here? What does thee mean?"

"Well, I came to dance, as thee did."

"But does thee know how?"

"Thee saw me!" (How indifferent he was.) "I danced long before my Quaker days, and loved it, too."

Dencey was more shocked every minute. Her father dancing. Keeping it secret from Mother. He was a disgrace.

"What will Mother say?" she demanded.

"Perhaps we'd better find out."

Yes, Dencey was shocked to the bone. The flagrancy of the fault came out plain. What did Father mean by it? It wasn't dignified—it wasn't right to Mother.

Tom led her into one of the wings of the build-

ing—a quiet place furnished with books and candles for all Communists.

"Thee need not go home," he told her. "Mother has known for a week thee was learning to dance, I told her."

"But how did thee know?"

"Richard told me with great glee what an apt pupil he had. Then Mother and I talked it over. I decided that here in Harmony thee must do as the Romans do. For my part I can see no harm in it."

"I want to go home, anyway," said Dencey with a little gulp. "Right now."

"Change thy kerchief first," advised Tom. "The embroidery would grieve thy mother."

So Dencey and her father stood before Lydia for confession.

"I wish thee had not deceived thy father and me," said Lydia. "It is not the dancing I mind so much as the deceit. I did not think thee could do that."

How could she, sure enough? Dencey was frightened to think how easily the devil had led her away. The explanation was long and painful, and Dencey wept some tears. But insensibly Lydia was beginning to realize that these Harmony dances were not quite like the forbidden ones in public

tavern or barn. Here everybody went—a recreation approved.

Was Lydia traveling farther from Nantucket than she knew? Lydia had this advantage—that her religion was alive. Harsh and austere though it was, it had the vital quality of fitting into new conditions, of seeing through them.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE SEA LETTER

IN ALL these experiences Dencey carried Jetsam with her—that Jetsam who was beginning to be almost more a creature of her imagination than the real boy she had known. Had not Jetsam always been glad to do what she did?—always approved of her—nay, more than approved? So Dencey in her fancy took him to the dances with her, fancied him too upon the galloping rides. He was much older now than that Jetsam who had kissed her. But she always saw him like that—boyish as he was that day.

But life was full and eager. There were the daily attentions of Amadie, Victor Neef, David Dale, and Richard Owen—yes, and MacHugh. Sometimes a week would pass when she hardly thought of Jetsam.

One afternoon, as she returned from her school duties, Lydia met her at the door.

"We have letters. I have one from Lovesta and another from Martha White—and thee has one too."

Dencey took it in a breathless daze.

"It's from Jetsam!" she cried. Her heart pounded with frightened happiness. She ran with her treasure up to her room—stood by her window and opened it with trembling fingers.

My Darling Dencey:

Thee will let me call thee that, won't thee? I can't seem to manage to call thee anything else. Thee does love me—doesn't thee, Dencey? I wish I could hear thee say the words. I wish thee had said them that time when I went away.

"Oh, I wish I had!" whispered Dencey, as if she were talking back to him.

But sometimes I'm just as glad thee didn't. I never could remember just words the way I remember thy kiss and the dear, dear look thee gave me. These live with me. And they always come to make me happy when I am down or wishing too hard to be home.

Poor Jetsam! What did he mean by "home"? Only the Coffyn home on North Water Street, now belonging to someone else. Dencey's thoughts ran along the letter like following birds. "How will

I ever find him when he comes back? How will he find me? And he hasn't had any of my letters. I wish he could get them."

The letter went on:

The other day we were in the boats and ours was coasting after a whale. I don't believe there is anything in the world goes so fast as that—like flying. First thee is up on a swell, then down in a hollow where thee can't see nothing.

"That's the first mistake he has made," commented Dencey, the teacher.

Nothing but the big swell in front of thee reaching to the sky.

Dencey knew what "coasting" was: that swift race when the whale had been harpooned and dashed away, mad with the harpoon and its long rope, which towed the boat after the frightened monster. This rope must be paid out to suit the whale's antics. Dencey caught her breath at the next sentence, for she knew it meant certain death.

All of a sudden the whale *sounded,* and just then the rope got caught. I was harpooner and standing in the bow. I felt us jerk under. And just then, Dencey—it's queer, but thy face came right before me. Thy face with all the love in it, as clear as a rising moon. I turned, whipped out my knife, and cut the rope. Pedro, the bow oar, said he never saw nothing so cool. They're all saying I saved the crew. But it wasn't me, Dencey,

it was thee, coming between me and death. Thee did not want me to die. Well, that's all of that.

We've got 800 barrel of oil in the hold. It will have to be more than a thousand before we start homeward bound. I wish it was a thousand now. Our last catch was pretty poor. I think it was a shame to kill the creature. It was an old bull Crook-Spout, a whale that traveled alone. All the ships knew him and called him that. He had butted one ship and foundered it, and had killed several men in boats—but he always got away. Captain Severance wouldn't command us to lower away for him, because he was dangerous. He let us volunteer. Of course, the whole crew volunteered. I'll tell thee about the fight we had when I get home. It happened in the harbor of Rio. When we went ashore all the natives were ready to kill us, because they worshiped old Crook-Spout and thought he brought them good luck. Dencey, thee could never believe how ugly and disgusting the native women are. I don't see how the same Divine Creator could have made them and also thee. Captain Caleb is still teaching me navigation like I told thee in my first letter. He's got *Bowditch's American Practical Navigator* and he helps me study it. I study it every day when we're not busy. It's a fine book. Captain Caleb is very kind to me. Sometimes I wonder if my father was like him.

"And he did not get my letter about the baby clothes Jill gave me," Dencey grieved. "I wish he had. Poor Jetsam, he would be so glad, and could hold up his head." She was almost angered at her helplessness to tell him what he so needed to know.

Captain Caleb and I saw London together. He bought a lot of books, and he lets me read them. I read sometimes all day, and I bought a book for thee, Dencey, because I know how

thee likes them. It is Shakespeare—I didn't know it was going to be play-acting. I thought he was a poet. And before I realized they were plays I read one. That is, I couldn't stop after I began it. It is called *As You Like It.*

"How wonderful! How wonderful!" Dencey rejoiced. They had been both reading the same beautiful thing, on opposite sides of the world. This was a miracle.

I won't tell thee the story. Because it will spoil it for thee. I have not read any more of the plays, though sometimes I'm so tempted that I think I will. I'll get thee another book if we go somewhere that I can buy one. Maybe Rio. I have bought thee a lot of other things, but I won't tell what. I want to surprise thee.

This is a long letter. We are in the harbor of Tahiti. There's a Boston ship here, too, and the Captain says he'll take mail home. I'm so glad of the chance to talk to thee that I spin a long yarn.

I don't know why I am so sure thee loves me, Dencey, but I guess it's because I could not live if thee didn't. So I can't think that way—not loving—I mean—and get along at all.

Thine in life and death,

JETSAM.

P. S. The Shakespeare is expurgated. Captain Severance says that makes a lot of difference.

Dencey sat for an hour in a deep happy dream, the sheets of the letter in her hand. How real was Jetsam. New Harmony with all its fascinations faded away, and Jetsam alone was there. How

starkly real was his life compared with the gay theorizing about her. Every day the dangers faced —so fearlessly. Death—he had that to face any day. How sure she was of his love.

She could not let her mother see the letter. That was hers alone. Lydia did not ask to see it.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE BREAK-UP

BUT Harmony was not quite the peaceful, carefree place that it seemed to Dencey. During all this time a mighty effort was putting forth to wrench civilization from its old anchors, to put it out of reach of war, contentions, the misery of poverty, and almost equal misery of riches. There had been doubts, quarrels, sneers. The outside world reported that there was nothing but quarrels. This was not true. But many a night Tom came home with anxious face from the meeting of the governing committee. Then a new constitution would be tried, a new mode of regulating labor. And the Harmony project would take heart and go limping on farther.

Dencey was the center of one such quarrel. It only seemed to her a joke.

She had grown very fond of Wilhelmina Neef. Their work was together, for both taught the primary school. Wilhelmina was an earnest musician. The Neefs had that rare blessing, a piano, and every morning before her day's duties Wilhelmina practised an hour. It was now spring—for the second time in Harmony. Noting how pretty Wilhelmina looked at the window with her piano, Dencey determined to make her picture. Dencey sat out in the garden with her easel. It was to be a water color, the most careful thing she had ever done.

Now the workmen of Harmony, passing by the garden to the steam mill, the tannery, the spring plowing, or planting, saw Dencey at her pleasant task and heard Wilhelmina.

"I'd like to know if this here's a community," they grumbled. "The fancy folks talk a lot about equality. But what is *ekel* about sittin' playin' the pianner an' drawin' silly pictur's? That thar's fun. Them two don't work."

"Well, I s'pose they teach all day," spoke up a woman grudgingly.

"Aw, what's teachin'? Specially the way they does it. Settin' still and talkin' nonsense to a lot of children an' then callin' it by a long fancy name. I tell ye hit's the same ole story. We does all the work an' they live off o' what we're a-doin'. They hain't givin' no wages in this here town. 'Work

fur work,' they says, 'hour fur hour.' Well, just let 'em plow a bit an' cook. Then they'll see."

The talk at last came to Mr. Owen. He had his problems these days. He appeared one morning where Wilhelmina and Dencey were ardently pursuing their two arts.

"Young ladies, do you want to help me keep peace?" he asked. "Will you each take care of a cow in the dairy?—the milking, I mean. The people do not realize that your teaching is work."

"Yes, indeed," laughed both the girls. "That will only be fun."

Next morning they arose an hour earlier and went to the dairy. Wilhelmina knew how to milk, and the dairy mistress called her "a real blessin', an' that she was." But Dencey's education in this direction had been neglected.

"Ye're far more trouble than a help, if ye want to know. But I s'pose Mr. Owen keeps ye here to satisfy them croaking crows."

"I don't like cows," Dencey answered with heat. "They're so stupid. And this one licks the back of my neck. Her tongue's the wettest thing I ever felt."

"Ye kin be glad she don't kick ye fur the way ye milks her," was the retort.

The girls washed their milk pails and pans to shining brightness.

In spite of such sacrifice in the economic cause,

the "crows" gathered again to their croaking. For the two young ladies had appeared promptly at the same hour to their music and picture making.

"What's two cows to milk, we'd like to know?" they said. "Hit's just deception."

Mr. Owen, with great deference, asked them if they would take more cows. Gayly they consented—rose two hours earlier. Again they appeared promptly, practising and painting in the public eye.

A third time they took more cows, a third time they pursued their arts, and a third time crows croaked louder than ever.

"All this here tinklin' and daubin' with paints! They're fancy young ladies, that's all. They hain't got nothin' to do."

This time Robert Owen brought his fist down on the table.

"You are utterly mistaken. I have tried to humor you. I will humor you no longer. You do not understand the Principles. You must leave the Community."

There were many such dismissals. Many efforts at readjustment. But the Community went downhill.

Owen tried earnestly to gather the scattered forces. But defeat met him on every side. At last came the stormy, confused meeting at the Great

Hall. Everybody attended this. All those folk who had been so neglectful of the weekly meeting for the building up of Community life were ready enough to come to see its destruction.

The Harmony Community was abandoned. New Harmony now was to be an ordinary town, like any other.

The sadness of this penetrated even the gayety of the young people. Great confusion was in the schools, the workshops. There were quarrels over property. There were quarrels over rights, people in groups and severally leaving town, in groups and severally calling Owen a fool.

A lonely, disheartened town.

Owen himself paid all the debts possible and left for Scotland, a poor man. MacHugh went with him. Ah, this was very lonely indeed. Virginie and Lucy were extremely sorrowful. Dencey too found that she missed him.

Tom for a while did not know what to do. Should he go back to Nantucket? Dencey found herself wrenched between love for her new home with its new free life and the joy of being in Nantucket to meet Jetsam. In about a year now he would return. Perhaps, after all, she would keep her promise and greet him there.

But after some wrangling the school was re-

organized under Maclure. Tom was offered the position of botany teacher. He decided to stay.

Very strange it seemed to see money again. There had been no money in New Harmony, bills or coins. The first time Dencey had to go to the Community Store and buy something with a silver dollar was sad indeed.

"I hate it," she said to her father. "Money is filthy. I don't mean dirt thee can see. But it isn't fair and honest. I don't like to get things I haven't worked for. I feel humiliated."

"Well, what an Owenite thee is!" commented Tom. "I hadn't known thee cared at all."

CHAPTER XXXVII

NEWS

MONTHS passed. Slowly the town quieted and began to run in the old worldly grooves. But it was never to be quite like other towns. It always remembered a divine beginning. Little customs lingered, and as quarrels subsided a great and generous friendliness.

Now began what has always been called "The Afterglow." Owen's four sons remained, each with his high ideal to be worked out. Thomas Say remained, a great boon to Tom Coffyn and indeed to all the town. Maclure came and went. The Neefs and Madame Fretageot still taught. Best of all for Dencey, Lesueur stayed, and, between his expeditions in the Western wilderness as naturalist, taught his classes in painting.

Every time he returned to these classes Dencey Coffyn had made a distinct advance. Her gift was for portraiture. People were vivid to Dencey, and their faces—souls, too—glowed under her hand. She drew with the suave, gentle lines of the art of that day, but Dencey's lines always told the truth. The portrait of Wilhelmina at her piano became quite famous.

Dencey still taught in the day school, at the munificent salary of fifteen dollars a month. Her painting was her recreation. But gradually, as the time went by, she grew more and more impatient about Jetsam. Jetsam was surely coming home! The four years of his voyage were ended. Any day now he would be arriving at Nantucket. She would not be there to meet him.

In all the while she had received only one more letter from Jetsam, and that of earlier date than the Tahiti letter. It told of his visit to London, of buying the books, and how he was reading the books every idle day. All this was old news. It did not occur to Dencey to doubt Jetsam. She only thought that the mail could not get through.

At last she found courage to ask her mother:

"Does thee think we could possibly make a visit to Nantucket?"

"It is very soon," said Lydia wistfully. "Only

four years. But I do wish we might go. Aunt Rhoda is still living. I'd love to see her once more."

She looked at her daughter.

"I think I know, Dionis, why thee wants to go."

"Yes, Mother. It is Jetsam. Think how hard for him to hurry up to our old home and find strangers there. I can't get it out of my mind. We were all he had."

"Dionis, does thee love him?" asked the direct Lydia.

"Yes, Mother, I do," answered Dencey, as solemn as a ceremony.

"I will talk to thy father."

Tom was distressed at the request to go to Nantucket.

"Is thee unhappy here, Lydia?" he asked. And when Lydia told him of Dencey's wish he was more distressed still.

"I hoped she'd fall in love with one of the nice young men out here. There are so many fine ones."

"She will not do that," said Lydia. "I have always known she would not."

They earnestly tried to plan the journey. Ariel was nine years old. He might stay with Tom in Harmony. But Ariel was delicate and needed Lydia's care. For a while they thought they could manage it. Dencey walked to her daily work as

though already absent from it—the weight of her promise to Jetsam lifted from her heart.

"All the same," Tom grumbled, "if the young man cares about her he should come out here."

But that only meant he had consented.

One warm March day Dencey came home from a sketching trip. Lesueur and David Dale, Lucy and Thomas Say had been up on the hills, where Lesueur had opened an Indian mound bringing to light vases, skeletons, beads—an archæological find which the scientists were studying. Dencey had made pictures of the open mound. She came in the gate, flushed and interested.

Lydia met her at the open door. In Lydia's face was that terrible loving-kindness of one who has news to tell and is futilely wishing to be God and avert the blow.

Dencey's happiness paled.

"What is it? Oh, Jetsam!" Her voice was a cry.

"Yes, darling," Lydia answered. "Jetsam and my brother Caleb, but they may not be dead. We may yet hear good news."

Dencey looked at her, utterly dumb.

"The ship was wrecked, but the men took to the boats. One boatful were picked up and have returned to Nantucket."

"Oh, how dreadful!" said Dencey commonplacely.

She was so blank and trembling that she was glad for Lydia's hand, leading her to a chair. She saw the letter on the table.

"Read it!" she commanded.

Lydia sat by her, reopening the letter. How she shrank from giving this mace stroke to the young, tender one beside her, so innocent of death.

The letter was from Aunt Lovesta. The ship had struck a coral reef in the South Pacific. A bad gale. One boat had swamped in sight of the present survivors. They thought it was Captain Severance's, but could not be sure. The young man Jetsam was with Captain Severance. The men who told the tale had had five days of suffering. Were picked up by a South American trader and carried to India. From here they had worked their way back to New York. The news was already a year and a half old.

"I won't believe it," Dencey announced harshly. "I don't have to believe it. They didn't see him die."

"No, dear," said Lydia. "And we ought to hope. Men have come home from such wrecks often. Yes, we must hope."

The old Nantucket sorrow! It had found these two, though so far away in the depth of the wilderness.

"But maybe," said Dencey suddenly, "maybe I

was laughing—or dancing—or something—when it happened—when Jetsam was facing death."

"Child, thee could not know."

"But it was heartless to do that when Jetsam was suffering."

"Dionis, that is not important. The important thing now is to hope for him and to pray."

But into Dencey's stricken and open mind this thought had entered like a robber. It held her and would not let her go. She knew it was foolish and utterly crooked, but in all the long months to follow she could not think of laughter save as a fault—a heartless, cruel thing. Even her comfort of food and fireside would seem snatched from Jetsam.

Now, in this first moment, she got up blindly and started toward the stair. Then came back again.

"What shall I do?" she asked her mother. "I don't know what to do!"

Lydia's instinct was to pray—at once and hour long. But she was wise enough these days to see that Dencey had not such skill.

"Go into the kitchen and begin supper," she said gently. "I will help thee."

A much more elaborate supper than usual was planned. Dencey must make a pie for next day. She was very careful at the work. Sometimes she broke the silence.

"If he were only here and very ill, I could do something for him."

"Yes."

And perhaps a half hour later:

"But he isn't dead. I know that. I know that."

"Yes, we both know that."

"We must keep the little clothes so he will know he didn't belong to Injun Jill."

"Who brought the letter?" Dencey asked later.

Lydia was glad of a story to tell.

"A stranger who has been in Nantucket. He has met Aunt Lovesta, and he brought the letter from her. He looks like a scholar and talks with the same accent as the Chappelsmiths, so perhaps he is English. We must see him and get all the Nantucket news. His name is Mr. Gay."

That night was the first of the many dreadful nights when Dencey tossed in an open boat on the open sea. Hunger and cold, the desperate attack of men in the boat upon each other—mad with fear and thirst—Dencey did not think all this: she *was* this. Had she not from childhood heard the stories? Had she not known there were other stories also, too dreadful for her to hear, kept from the women by the men who went to sea? She kept guessing what these were. Saw, in horrible flashes, what they must be.

And this was Jetsam. The funny, silly Jetsam.

The Jetsam with whom she had run away from Injun Jill. The Jetsam who had sworn at her when she threw the stone at him. The Jetsam who was so mad at her when he found her in the snow. The Jetsam who had kissed her. Oh—that one couldn't be dead! Jetsam! Jetsam!

Of course, the whole town heard the news. Dencey, who had been always a center of merriment, became a center of pity. Everybody was tenderly kind. Even the person who spoke casually on the street spoke in a gentler tone. It was the worst thing in the world for Dencey. She moved in a shadow place of her own.

She went to her work as usual, but came back to shut herself into her room and weep. The questions about God, His strange unkindness, His far-away-ness when she needed Him so near—these she had to battle now. No one could help her. All through Community days she had heard these same free religious discussions. That was fortunate. She had fought these doubts before. But at that time she had seemed to have weapons. Now the weapons were taken away from her.

Ariel was her greatest help. At first he seemed quite interfering, coming up to her room and asking her to do his history lesson or to read to him by the hour. But presently she began to realize how close he was keeping to her because of her sorrow.

Sensitive beyond his years was Ariel, a slender little boy who, if he did not watch against it, always dragged one foot. He had been named for the strong angel of the Bible, Ariel, Lion of God, but his illness had made him more like the fine creature of Shakespeare's imagining—the delicate Ariel who could always do Prosper's most exquisite biddings. He would listen long hours to Dencey's reading and ask her such difficult questions that she had to go to the dictionary and other wise books to find the answers. He had a child's faith in Jetsam's return, a gift for mystic seeings which gave Dencey more strength than she herself guessed.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE LIGHTNING MAN

IT WAS an interesting summer for the village. Distinguished visitors arrived. The Duke of Saxe-Weimar, Bodmer, his artist, Audubon, and other scientists. They were the guests of the whole town. Everybody enjoyed their conversation, their lectures, their discoveries. Philadelphia and New Harmony were the two scientific centers of the United States. Many a famous scholar made the long wilderness journey to the little town.

In the happy gatherings Dencey would take no part. The old fallacy pursued her: "Perhaps the very moment I was happy, Jetsam would be dying." Tom hardly knew his daughter these days. The gay, headlong Dencey was no more. In her place was a quiet, biddable person, quite colorless. When-

ever Tom looked at her his whole face changed to tenderness and pain.

There was one incident, however, that brought a day of outside interest, at least. The summer was one of storms. Harmony can produce thunderstorms the most dramatic ever known, and this summer seemed to have a special dramatic season. In one of these storms Dencey looked out the window to see a man walking up the street. The rain was drenching, the lightning was red. It came with a switching, crackly sound of its own and was accompanied by pistol shots of thunder. Nobody could do anything but cower in the house and wait for it to be over.

"Whatever is that man doing out there?" Dencey asked her mother.

Lydia looked out.

"Why, it's Mr. Gay!" Lydia said. Dencey too recognized the man who had brought them the fateful letter. "He's holding an iron rod upright in his hand. Isn't that a queer thing to do?"

"The rod will attract lightning," said Dencey. "Look at him now. He's turned and is walking back again. The middle of the street."

Just then a great flash seemed to strike in their very garden.

"He'll be killed," said Lydia.

Quick as a thought (there was no use of hat or

coat in such rain as this) Dencey dashed out of the house, out of the gate, and to Mr. Gay. She snatched the rod out of his hand and threw it down, clanging.

"Now thee come in," she commanded. "Quick, quick!"

She seized his hand and dragged the astonished and unwilling Mr. Gay up the street and to their house. He stood in the parlor, dripping pools of water on the floor. Hair plastered—clothes plastered with wet. A frail stooped figure.

"I didn't want to come in," he protested. "I'll spoil your house."

"Mr. Gay—but why did thee walk in the street?" asked Lydia.

"And why did thee carry that rod of iron?" queried Dencey, shaking her dress and her wet hair.

"It's this way," said Mr. Gay. "I'd like to die. There's nothing for me to do here in the world. I am not the least ill or likely to die. I don't want to kill myself. It's unpleasant and also wrong. So I thought if I carried that lightning rod that perhaps the Lord would send me a stray bolt or two."

"But that is killing thyself, just the same," exclaimed Dencey.

"No, I think not. The bolt is from the Lord's hand."

"But the iron was in *thy* hand. It would be suicide, I tell thee."

"I hope not. I hope not. For I greatly wish to die."

The pathos of the man's face touched Lydia.

"This is no time for discussions," she said. "Dencey, go upstairs at once and put on dry clothes. Mr. Gay, please go into Mr. Coffyn's study. I will bring thee dry things."

Tom, when he heard of the matter, was rather indignant.

"It was a queer thing to do," he commented. "And why should he want to do it? Mr. Gay won't talk of his past—won't even tell me how he came to be in Nantucket. There's something wrong about him. This town has enough queer people in it without adding him to the number."

But as it turned out Tom grew more fond of Mr. Gay than any other of the family. He proved to be a zoölogist of no mean attainment. He had studied in Paris under Cuvier. He was, however, not French but English, a sensitive man, with shy, sad eyes.

Tom brought him to the house. He began one night timidly to tell Sally a story about the industrious Mr. Beaver and the dam he built across the stream. Sally begged for more, and often in the long twilight evenings Sally heard, entranced, the story

of the shiftless Mrs. Gull who built such a twiggy nest, of the neat Mrs. Oriole who built such a pretty one, of the stag who dropped his horns because he could get new ones covered with velvet. Mr. Gay would tell these until time for Sally to go to bed.

So Mr. Gay was added to the procession of those who warmed their hearts at the Coffyn household life.

There followed a long, dreary winter. Dencey held to her hope as a dog does to a bone, fearing it will be snatched away.

"He is coming back," she told Lucy Sistaire as they walked the snowy street to school. "Any day I might get a letter from Nantucket telling me he is there."

"Or he might come here," suggested Lucy pityingly.

"I wish he would."

One day in early spring Lydia came into Dencey's room and shut the door.

"I have something to say to thee," she told her.

"Yes, Mother," said Dencey, putting aside her book.

"Thee has all this while hoped for Jetsam to return. That has been good. But it is not good any

longer. I want thee to give up hoping, if thee can."

"I can't do that," said Dencey hardly. "I think it would be cruel to Jetsam."

"No, it would not be cruel to him. He is in the bliss of heaven, and thy sorrow can only pain him there."

"Mother, how can thee say that? It's wicked to say he is dead."

The ready tears began to flow down Dencey's cheeks.

"No, it is not wicked. The sailors saw the boat swamped and were practically sure it was Brother Caleb's boat with Jetsam in it. We must take their word for it. Now two years and a half have passed since the wreck. There have been men who have come back after ten years, twenty years, but those were always men who really did not want to come because of the wicked lives they had led. If Jetsam were alive he would have come back to Nantucket before now."

"No, no!" said Dencey fiercely.

"Dencey," said Lydia severely, "thee seems to think no one has ever had sorrow but thee. Sorrow has come to thee very young. But it comes to all. And all must face it. Thee must face it now."

The Quaker knew when to apply the cautery.

"Thee is making the whole family unhappy. Ariel is half sick because of thee. Sally is afraid

of thee and runs to me when thee comes in. Thy father is miserable. Does thee think I have had no sorrow, losing my dear brother Caleb? Yet I do not mope. I am ashamed of thee, Dionis."

"No—no, Jetsam is alive. I won't give up and say he is dead. I won't!" cried Dencey. And so Lydia left her.

But next morning when Dencey came to breakfast Lydia saw that hope in spite of Dencey's assertions was gone. The tense anxiety had left Dencey's face. The terrible strain which all had felt who came in contact with her. Instead was the droop of a withered flower, a deeper shadow, but a shadow out of which Dencey might creep into life again.

CHAPTER XXXIX

TWO RUFFIANS IN NEW HARMONY

DENCEY began to paint again. Making poor pictures, not caring whether they were poor or good. She took up work for the Maclure School. Painted those stiff little water-colors of birds and flowers which the children used in science classes. She was thin, spoke in a slow voice. Her face did not awake with interest, she merely took part in whatever came her way.

Robert Owen came back.

More important still, MacHugh came with him. Everybody rejoiced over his return—the young folk made MacHugh's coming a holiday. They had parties and balls in his honor, and almost daily horseback expeditions. Owen still had many busi-

ness tangles to adjust. In all of them he lost money, for he had the ethical determination to pay for all losses that anybody could possibly attribute to the Community effort.

Maclure was more careful. Two men who came back to town with the purpose of getting property from him found themselves balked. They claimed a certain lot of land not far from the schools. Their only claim upon it was that Maclure had let them live there during the Community year. They were supposed to be fine machinists, but they were swindlers who had come to the Community to get what they could out of what they called "Owen's durn schemes." Now they had returned. There were some stormy scenes, for Maclure had a high temper.

Dencey heard something of all this from her father, who deeply admired Mr. Maclure and regretted any trouble that might come to so generous a man. She knew the two machinists, McGinn and Seizler, by sight, as indeed everyone was known in New Harmony.

In March came an unexpected warm week, melting the snow entirely and bringing out the catkins on the willows. One such willow near the old Labyrinth attracted Dencey's notice. The Labyrinth was a charming garden south of town, left by the ingenious Rappites. Its high-hedged walks were laid out as a maze so that no one might, by

himself, find the pretty garden house hidden in the center. The whole was surrounded by a high yew hedge. Outside of this Dencey set up her easel and stool. The willow was a festoon of grace. She began to draw it in the delicate detailed fashion which Lesueur had taught her. She was determined to take interest in the drawing, but she had to push her mind to it. All seemed dead work. Presently the watery afternoon light with its soft intimation of spring caught her attention. She hastily abandoned her drawing to make a water color of the landscape with the willow at its center. She would catch that spring mood. She did not realize how time was passing, except that the light was fading and she must get her picture while she could. Just back of her was the gable end of the deserted Rope Walk shed. Suddenly, as she worked, she became aware that two men were in the shed, talking. Their voices were quite distinct in the perfect quiet. They were swearing every sentence.

"The ole skinflint. He's the richest man in Indjiany. But yet don't he make the dollars holler!"

"That thar prop'ty don't amount to nothin' to a man like Maclure," said another voice. "We'll git it yit. You see ef we don't. We can scare him into it."

"How scare him?"

Dencey recognized that they were McGinn and Jay Seizler, the two men who were trying to get the

land from Maclure. The first seemed to be thinking out the deviltry he had proposed. Presently he spoke again.

"Well, Maclure, he's got the best house in town. If we wus to burn it I reckon he'd begin to think."

"Burn it!" Seizler seemed scared. "That wouldn't do us no good."

"Yes, 'twould too. I've kind o' promised myself to get even with him."

"Hit mought scare him," McGinn conceded. "Hit mought scare him enough to make him give us suthin'—if not the land, suthin' else."

Dencey was so startled that she sat with brush poised, mouth open. Burn Maclure's house! Burn the dear school where she had studied for four years—where she had learned such wonderful things and had such wonderful good times! Madame Fretageot, moving swiftly through those rooms at her eager teaching, flashed through Dencey's mind. She loved the place more than her own home. McGinn was speaking again.

"We cud do it even ef we didn't git nothin' from it. I allus git even with people that do me a bad turn, an' I allus will."

"Well, hit's a risk. I'd like to git suthin' out of it," said Seizler.

"Mebbe we would, too. I'd like moughty well to give old Maclure a lick. These hyar people never

locks their doors an' half the time leaves their windas open. We could throw in a brand. Hit ud be easy. Then we cud leave town."

"Well, I hain't goin' to leave town," asserted Seizler—"not till I git that property."

Dencey suddenly realized that she must go. She shut her sketchbook, folded her easel. She was trembling. The whole thing was so horrible that it frightened her very soul. As she picked up her stool her easel fell to the ground. The noise was not great, but in the stillness of the place it was quite plain. Instantly she heard the men shuffle to their feet, and the next instant they had run out of the shed toward her.

"What ye doin' hyar?" demanded Seizler, while McGinn began to curse angrily.

"I was painting," stammered Dencey. She was so strangely ashamed for them both that she did not know what to say.

"Paintin' and eavesdroppin', I'm thinkin'," said McGinn. "Now, young gal, jist state what ye heard."

"I do not care to repeat it," said Dencey with an angry flush.

"Yes, and ye're not to repeat it. Do ye hyar me? Ye're not to state that thar to no one, or we'll make ye suffer."

Dencey picked up her stool and started away.

"Look hyar." Seizler stepped after her. "Ye got to promise that."

"I won't promise," said Dencey, hurrying faster.

She was frightened. The road toward town was perfectly lonely and beginning to look dim under the trees. Suddenly McGinn ran up, seized her arm, and shook her so that chair, easel, and all fell in the path.

"Ye will promise, too, you gal," he swore.

He struck at her, but Seizler intercepted the blow.

"Ye tarnel fool," he said. "If ye hit her, won't the bruise tell by hitself? Now, look at me, missy." He fixed her with his black, narrow eyes. "Ye promise not to say a word about this business an' we'll let ye go. We didn't mean nothin' noways."

"You did mean something," said Dencey, with a sudden steady light in her eyes. The destruction of that treasure house of Harmony flashed before her eyes. Would she keep still and allow it? The old Quaker resistance rose in her as it had when she was a little girl. That ancestress tied to a cart's tail and whipped through three towns to make her recant spoke through Dencey now.

"Thee did mean something. Thee means to burn Mr. Maclure's house, and thee shan't do it. Not if I can help it."

She started furiously down the road. Seizler

stood and watched her go, but McGinn followed her. He was panting with anger.

"I reckon ye won't tell ef ye know what we'll do to ye. We'll foller ye. We kin ketch ye, too. An' mark my word, ef ye tell, we'll punish ye."

Faster went Dencey. Faster came McGinn.

"Promise, ye fool!" he shouted. The man's threats had awakened such resistance in her that it did not occur to her to pretend a promise. Lying never came easy to Dencey.

Never had the Labyrinth Road seemed so long. McGinn kept after her, sometimes threatening, sometimes silent, but menace was in both. They passed the first lonely little house, and he lowered his voice. Now the old frame warehouse at the edge of town loomed shadowy by the path. At the Green Tavern McGinn slipped into a side street. At least, Dencey lost him. She hastened on to the corner of Church and Main streets. No one was in sight in the shady common. Here she might turn down toward home or go straight ahead to Maclure's. As this thought crossed her suddenly McGinn appeared from behind a tree.

"Ye go ahead thar to Maclure's and I'll shoot," he muttered.

And instantly Dencey's decision was made. It was as if she could not help it.

She darted straight ahead toward the Maclure's

gate. A shot rang sharp in the twilight, and Dencey ran up the steps. For a moment she did not know whether she was hurt or not. Then she stood breathless in Maclure's hallway.

A pistol shot was not so rare a thing in New Harmony, where the backwoodsmen came in of evenings and often got into quarrels. People came mildly to their doors and wondered.

Meanwhile Dencey had found Maclure and was trying to tell him the story, in spite of breathlessness and the pounding of her heart. Maclure listened, horrified.

"Do you mean the ruffian followed you all the way from the Labyrinth, threatening you? Why on earth didn't you promise him—anything?"

"I—I didn't think about it," panted Dencey.

No—she did not think. Instinct, the inbred Quaker stand for truth, had driven her along.

Someone passed through the hallway.

"MacHugh," called Maclure. The young man came in. "Here's a distressing matter—those ruffians McGinn and Seizler threatening to burn my house and then frightening Miss Dencey. Did you hear the shot?"

"Yes, I thought it was one of the backwoodsmen." MacHugh looked anxiously at her.

"Miss Dencey, has anything happened to you? Great heavens, did they hurt you?"

"No. He only shot into the air to—to scare me from coming here."

"But evidently you came, anyway."

"He was threatening to burn the house," she explained.

"But he wouldn't have done so at once. Why in the world didn't you go home as he commanded? He might have killed you."

"I didn't think. But it just seemed if I went home I'd only bring Father into danger. One person was enough to tell it. It had to be told."

"It was a foolish risk, Miss Dencey," said Maclure.

"Those men ought to be made to leave town at once," said MacHugh, fuming.

"Yes, their threatening Miss Dencey is quite enough to give us the right of expulsion," Maclure returned. "I'll see the sheriff about it. McGinn and Jay Seizler were flatboatmen, the scum of the emigration. It is still all too easy for criminals to live at large here in the wilderness."

"I'll go on home now," said Dencey, feeling somehow that she was being rebuked.

"I'll certainly go with you," said MacHugh.

As they came out upon the steps MacHugh asked:

"Did they say they would follow you, Miss Dencey? I mean follow you afterward?"

"Well, yes, they did," she acknowledged. "But of course they won't."

"Excuse me. There is no 'of course' about it. Would you mind if I should keep with you somewhat until they leave town?"

"Why, no," Dencey answered, surprised, "but thee shouldn't take the trouble. I could stay at home."

"You shall not be kept prisoner by those ruffians," said MacHugh, with sudden heat.

They came to her door.

"I suppose I was foolish," Dencey mused. "But when they said they would burn our school, with its pictures and books—and kindnesses—I only remembered that I must not let them do it."

MacHugh lifted his hat.

"You are a very fine young person, Miss Dencey," he said.

CHAPTER XL

A KNIGHT FOR DENCEY COFFYN

NEXT morning, as Dencey came out of the garden gate to go to school-teaching, MacHugh happened to be passing and walked with her to the school door. Next morning the same thing happened. Dencey began to see, with a little flutter of interest, what MacHugh was doing.

Meanwhile Maclure and the sheriff summoned the two men. Only Seizler appeared, but he denied the whole thing for them both.

That gal was dreamin'. Tryin' to make herself some punkins. Why on airth should they burn Maclure's house or any other in town? They'd sue that gal fur slander. They wus respectable citizens and could git recommends what would show it.

Anyways, they had business in Evansville an' wus goin' there to-morrow.

They went to Evansville, but returned the next week. McGill did not dare to appear in town, but Victor Neef and others who were hunting met him in the woods and near the Labyrinth. Seizler still argued with Maclure about his right to the land.

One afternoon MacHugh asked Dencey to go riding with him. She hesitated. It seemed so strange to go pleasuring with anyone. But thinking of his kindness, she consented. They rode out of town. One of those crisp sunny afternoons of March. Such a relief after the February snows.

MacHugh was a handsome figure on horseback —graceful and at ease.

"Isn't it good to be alive?" he said, looking at Dencey with a happy light in his black eyes.

It had not seemed "good to be alive" for a year, but Dencey, for politeness, answered, "Yes."

The horses, both Dencey's and MacHugh's, had been in the stable for months. They too felt it good to be alive. They pranced—tossed their heads in the vain effort to get rid of their bits. And once free of town MacHugh's black Kentuckian found some excuse to run away. Dencey's Betty needed no further invitation and promptly ran away too.

There was nothing for it but to let them run. The

road was abominable. The "corduroy," which consisted of saplings laid across the way, scantily covered with clay mud, was a fine opportunity for stumbling.

MacHugh managed to look back. There was Dencey, sitting her steed, her body giving sweetly to Betty's wind-swift gallop, her face intense but confident. In the midst of the pounding hoofs sounding beneath, in spite of the startling flight, she was thinking, "What if she does throw me? What if she does kill me? Then I'd be with Jetsam." But in spite of such somber expectation Dencey managed her mare with fine skill, kept her from stumbling, and at last brought her under control. MacHugh came alongside, glowing with thankfulness.

"God bless you, Dencey," he said. "I don't believe you were afraid for one moment. I don't believe you're afraid of anything. Gracious, what splendid women are made in the wilderness!"

Dencey noticed that the "Miss" had been dropped.

She came home, her blood tingling through her veins, her eyes like stars. Sally ran to her and threw both arms around her. And Dencey, suddenly realizing how long it had been since dear little Sally had done so, gave her a hug and a kiss.

"I've been pretty selfish," she thought to herself. "I'm going to keep hold of myself and behave."

Tom, looking at her that evening, felt a great load lifting from his heart.

MacHugh certainly took his rôle of protector seriously. The walks to school became a daily occurrence. This was unnecessary, but Dencey could hardly object when he accompanied her on her long country walks and errands which did need protection. The two men were yet about town, and once when she went to the store to get salt for her mother Seizler grinned at her so knowingly from behind the stove that she could hardly wait for the salt, to get out of the store. Several times after twilight she saw a figure carelessly lingering by the garden fence. The backwoodsmen always stood around the Harmony streets, but they chose Main Street for their lingering place, not a side street under the trees.

She could not object to MacHugh's attentions. Indeed, she was thankful for them. She knew too well that the shielding was no fancied necessity.

The Harmony folk, of course, could let no such incident as this pass without comment.

"MacHugh isn't letting the grass grow under his feet," said one.

"I think he'd be ashamed to pay Dencey so much court when she's grieving for her dead lover," said another.

"Well, doesn't he have to protect her?"

"Her father could do that!"

"I'd like to know how, when he has his teaching to do and is finishing his book on flowers."

"Well, anyway, isn't it a crying shame that Dencey should have those horrid men threaten her when she's had so much trouble already? I've always said trouble never comes singly."

The neighbors might have saved their pity, for nothing could have been better for Dencey than this daily danger. Sometimes she tried to argue that it was nothing. Indeed, the sheriff took it rather lightly. "They can't do nothin' to ye, Miss Dencey," he said.

These reasonings pro and con struck across her thoughts of Jetsam and saved her from that one straight path of bitter memory. One evening, indeed, when she had gone upstairs daydreaming about Jetsam, she heard a shuffling step outside her window on the street path. She looked out to see McGinn's face leering up at her. A few moments later MacHugh came to call. She could not fail to be glad to see him. But she did not tell him the incident. She did not want to urge the care upon him.

CHAPTER XLI

MACLURE'S HOUSE, AFTER ALL

OF COURSE, back of all this excitement was still her heartache for Jetsam, ready to step forward whenever she was alone, always ready to step into her thoughts before she went to sleep and to come back with a dull ache as she awoke.

But sometimes when she was alone, as she was dressing for a walk or ride with MacHugh, she could not fail to enjoy his beauty, his kindness, his liveliness. Dencey was young and much alive. She could not help turning back to life. Death and grief were sour to her youthful mind. It was a relief, like breathing pure air after a charnel house, to turn back toward life rather than death. Besides she did not know she was turning back to life. The change came so gradually—day by day and week by week.

Then MacHugh had some urgent business for Mr. Owen which absorbed him. He did not come so often. Perhaps he too thought it was foolish to take such care, as the men were not often seen now. Perhaps he thought he had been too continuous in his attentions. Dencey found, to her horror, that she missed him—that she kept looking up the street to see if he were coming.

Then one night she heard a cry in the street:

"Fire, fire, fire!"

She looked out. The whole street was glowing; and the garish reflection was on the Steeple and the Great Hall.

"Maclure's house!" was the shout. "Water! Get water."

The family dressed hastily and went down to the scene. The whole town was there.

"It's brick. It won't burn. We can save it. Water! More water!" Madame Fretageot was in the street, in her wrapper and shawl. The school children, half frightened and wholly entertained, were everywhere. Water was brought from the Maclure well in buckets. They formed a double fire line, passing the buckets back and forth to dash upon the flames. The Coffyn well, too, was used. What frantic running to and fro! But as fast as they quenched the flames in one place they broke out in another. Will

you believe it! McGill and Jay Seizler were there working hardest of anybody.

"The gall of 'em!" said the sheriff. "The impidence!"

But no one else had time to think of them. Young Victor Neef dashed into the burning building to save Maclure's precious things. MacHugh dashed in after him. Everybody helped. Dencey found her heart throbbing with terror. It was not for Victor or the others; it was for MacHugh.

The two young men came out, carrying between them the beautiful terrestrial globe in its mahogany stand; then dashed back again for the celestial globe.

"And my mathematical apparatus—oh, I cannot lose it!" pleaded Madame Fretageot.

Others joined the salvagers. "The building must go," they said desperately.

It was the handsomest house in town. Old German architecture. A precious thing.

MacHugh began at the books. A futile task, for the books reached to the ceiling in Maclure's study, and stood in shelves all through the house.

The roof caved in.

Dencey by this time was weeping with terror. As MacHugh came out with a book-armful she suddenly found herself at his side pleading desper-

ately that he should not go back. How strange he looked, all dirty—covered with perspiration.

"We must save all we can," he panted.

Abruptly Maclure caught his arm.

"Stay here," he thundered. He was always an excitable man. "If you and Victor Neef go in again I'll—I'll shoot you both."

Nobody thought to laugh at this ridiculous threat.

"Stay out, everybody!"

In the early spring dawn the Maclure school stood, a mass of smoking ruins. In those ashes were some of the most precious things in all the Western country. Pictures from Rome, mineral specimens from Hungary, manuscripts, books from Paris, not to be purchased anywhere again, engravings, silver curios, and scientific instruments so needed in Harmony.

The lovely sunshine stole over all. The fragrance of the blossoming fruit-trees mingled with the sour smell of smoke. The beauty of the new green trees flaunted against the repulsive black confusion. Cruel Nature, not to care for such a loss! Cruel, not to shrink from this showing of hate in a town that had been founded upon lovingkindness!

New Harmony was to grieve a hundred years for what it lost that day.

CHAPTER XLII

THE WALK ON THE HILLS

THE next day Harmony could think of nothing but its loss; the mystery of the fire. Places had to be found for the school children. Maclure began industriously to fit up the Steeple House and the Great Hall for his school.

"I shall rebuild at once," he said.

With all their effrontery, McGinn and Seizler were afraid to be seen in town that day.

In the afternoon MacHugh called to ask Dencey for a walk. He was rested by a long sleep, freshened by bath and new clothes. He looked lovable and happy.

They walked out south of town, past the Labyrinth with its yew hedges star-tipped with green,

and up Indian Hill. The forest was continuous then —only on the edge of the river bluff could they see away. But here they could look down on the wide, placid Wabash with its Fox Island, over into Illinois, and back again to the Indiana side, where pretty Harmony town nestled in its trees. This was the view so often sketched and painted by young Harmonites. Dencey had sketched it often.

The westering sun made all the landscape gentle and a-drowse.

"It is so different from my home," said MacHugh thoughtfully. "There we have sharp crags against the sky, and the wide, pale Northern sea. Often it is a cruel sea, beating at my Isle o' Starr as though it would devour."

"Nantucket isn't craggy," responded Dencey, "but it's lonely in a storm. It always seems to be fighting a big battle to keep itself alive. The folks thought I was queer because I'd go out on the Commons and watch it. It made me feel strong."

"You would love my Starr," said MacHugh softly. Then after a pause, "I have to go back soon. There are people who need me. I have lingered here much longer than I intended."

Dencey was amazed at the pang this gave her. He was going out of her life—MacHugh! She would never see him again. She dared not answer a word. MacHugh, glancing at her, knew she dared

not and was glad. Dencey could not but know he had lingered to be with her. Then why was he going now?

He began to tell her of his island, of the basaltic cliffs that are carved by frost and waves to look like towers, minarets, and cathedrals; of the Cullins which soar up three thousand feet out of the sea, of the MacHugh forests, and of Duntelm, the ancient castle of the MacHugh chieftain. He loved it as Highlanders love their own.

Then he told her of his people, of their sorrowful penury and how he had hoped to help them by his knowledge of Owen's Principles. MacHugh never spoke of his rank except in terms of service.

It was as romantic as the *Arabian Nights.*

Dencey hardly spoke, watching his face light and grow tender as he talked of home.

"I don't want him to go," she kept thinking desperately. "I don't want him to go. I won't know what to do then."

Slowly, in the midst of their talk, they were aware of a low, rumbling sound, like very far-off thunder—a thunder that was continuous. It was in the south. MacHugh's first thought was of one of those twisting storms called the tornado. They must find shelter—a hollow under the bluff. Quick! He seized Dencey's arm. But she spoke.

"Look down the river."

There they saw curious blue-black clouds somewhat above the horizon. Dencey had seen such before.

"It's the wild pigeons," she said. "They're coming North—the dear things. I always think they bring the spring."

"Wonderful," said MacHugh in an awed voice. "Wonderful. The people at home would never believe it."

Slowly, steadily, the aërial multitude approached: The proof of Nature's prodigality in early America.

Pigeons, pigeons, pigeons! Enough to darken the sky. And as they came nearer they did darken it, in great floating clouds. The roar and hum of their wings was like some vast unresistible purpose made audible. So God's host might move. Indeed, they were a host dear to the hand of their Creator.

As the advance guard passed over Fox Island Dencey saw the trees dip and bow under the wind of their wings. A detachment of them swept into the trees near Dencey and MacHugh. Such a roar and clatter. They made the smaller branches sway and crack and break down. Every tree about them became a fluttering burden.

"They are so beautiful," breathed Dencey. "Look at their purple necks and their pretty eyes. I hope the huntsmen won't see them."

"But they will—they have," said MacHugh, as sounds of shooting were heard in the valley.

"Such a pity—such a pity," said Dencey. "The men kill and kill. Hundreds, more than they can eat. Whenever one bird is wounded the others hover around just as long as they can hear its cry. That way the men can shoot and shoot to their hearts' content. The birds won't leave their wounded. Oh, there they are, shooting again. How can they be so cruel!"

The two lingered long, watching the wonderful flight. In this silence there was common enjoyment, a deep companionship. MacHugh talked of the marvel of bird migration, the homing instinct of pigeons, surer than any human knowledge. Dencey's mind was quickened by his. But beneath all the talk she kept grieving that he was going away.

When they turned home twilight was falling.

They were walking Indian file along the narrow forest path when two men suddenly jumped from the underbrush. One instant Dencey thought they were the pigeon hunters. Next instant she recognized McGinn and Jay Seizler.

"Now we got ye whar we want ye," said McGill.

MacHugh must have seen them before they appeared. At least, so Dencey thought, for his action

was so quick as to seem beforehand. Out came his pistol. Immediately he had shot Seizler in the arm. Seizler howled with terror. McGinn leaped forward, but MacHugh caught him with such a blow that he pitched backward. Then MacHugh covered them both with his still smoking pistol. Thus had his MacHughs met forays in those cliffs of Starr. It was the action of a skilled, clean, normal man against clumsy ruffians.

"Now tak' yoursel's off," he said, speaking broad Scotch in his excitement. "If it warn't for my lady here I'd shoot ye baith to some parpose. Ye cumber the airth."

The two men scrambled up shamefaced, miserable, and let the young folk pass. MacHugh put Dencey in front of him and kept backward watch all the way they went.

As they came out to the road near a farmhouse and safety Dencey suddenly gave way to sobs and tears. The shock had completely unnerved her.

"Darling, I am so sorry. I wish it hadn't happened. Dear heart! You are safe now."

He was instantly the lover. As instantly Dencey knew he must not be. He would have put his arms about her, but she shrank away.

"Don't, oh, don't!" she cried.

She knew she did not want to go back with him

to the Isle of Starr. She knew—yes, she knew she was crying now simply because Jetsam was dead.

MacHugh knew this also. He took her arm with gentle politeness.

"Never mind," he said. "We will be at home before long."

In silence he let her gain control, in silence took her to her own gate and left her without a word.

In the solitude of her room Dencey met her old foes of remorse. She had let MacHugh help her in her sorrow with never a thought of him. Now he was in love with her. She had perceived all this before and had wilfully shut her eyes.

Also she had been forgetting Jetsam—Jetsam, who was so faithful always. What if he were in heaven? Was that any reason to forget him? But had she forgotten Jetsam? In her revulsion of feeling it seemed to her that she could not forget Jetsam if she lived a hundred years.

And yet, what to do about MacHugh?

He came again in the evening—gentle, handsome, altogether lovable. Dencey was uplifted at the sight of him.

"I did not mean to speak so soon," he said, his face aglow with the love he had kept shadowed before. "I know you are sorrowful. You cannot love me now. But I hope you will. I shall keep trying."

In spite of herself Dencey could not but be glad he should try. Should keep on trying.

"I cannot help grieving for my—friend," she faltered.

"No, but you must not grieve always," he answered.

"I think I will, Mr. MacHugh. I think that the deepest of my thoughts will always belong to him."

"But you must have a living love. You cannot help it, Dencey. You are so beautiful and young and strong. You are not dead. You are left here on earth with us. Dencey, you are here with *me*."

Dencey was trying to take the long look forward. She gazed into space, dreaming. She seemed to see how love might be made of such sweet companionship as this. These common ideals, the sorrows that would come, and the tender, mysterious joys. And MacHugh was so beautiful.

"Thee is very dear to me," she said under her breath. "I have to tell thee that because—because it is true. And I am cut to the heart because thee is going away."

Her eyes came back—met his.

MacHugh's face lighted with happiness. It was all he could do to keep from throwing his arms about her. But he was too wise. This fluttering of life must not be touched or breathed upon.

Her face suddenly clouded with distress.

"Oh, why can't I know my mind as other girls do? I don't want to be cruel. I don't want thee to go away lonely."

He bent and kissed her hand—a long, eloquent kiss, it was.

"You dear honest spirit," he said. "I will not go away lonely. I am not afraid. You will wait for me, dear Dencey, and I will come back to you."

CHAPTER XLIII

THE MAY BALL

LATE in May the spring ball was to be given in the Great Hall—the ball of the year. The next day after it MacHugh was to start on his journey. He asked Dencey to go to the ball. She could not refuse him this last-hour wish. She did not want to refuse him.

"And why not wear a bright dress?" suggested Lucy Sistaire. "You don't look like anybody else in your gray Quaker."

"I don't mind the gray," said Dencey, "I'm used to it."

"Well, MacHugh will mind. Don't you suppose he's used to taking out gorgeously dressed ladies in London?"

"But I haven't any but Quaker dresses and my Community costume."

"I'll lend you a dress," spoke up Virginie Dupalais. "I'll lend you the dress I got from Paris. I wouldn't lend it to another soul, but I will to you."

"The Community costume indeed!" laughed Lucy. For the old Community costume was a trousered affair, impossible in the eyes of the elect.

The three hurried over to Virginie's room.

"I don't want to wear it," objected Dencey. "I always feel strange in other dresses."

But, laughing at her protests, they put it on her. It was a high-waisted frock, a little full in the skirt, as was beginning to be the fashion. It reached not quite to her ankles, had an overdress looped up with roses, a rose on each shoulder. Dress and all were the color of a bright red rose. Of course it was low necked and short sleeved.

"Thee looks perfectly beautiful in it," exclaimed the emancipated Lucy. "It's a perfect shame with thy black hair and eyes to dress in gray."

"Come over to Madame's mirror," commanded Virginie. "It's larger."

Madame's mirror was only a three-foot one, but it gave back to Dencey an unmistakable vision. The glowing colour sent its glow into her dark face. Her eyes were jewel-like, her hair ebony. The change

was startling. She hid her face, laughing in sudden shyness.

"I'll wear it if Father says so," she conceded. She knew well that Lydia would be displeased.

They hurried over to Dencey's home, where Tom sat in his study, writing. At their interruption he looked up—perfectly blank for a moment.

"My stars! Dencey!" he exclaimed, and his face blossomed with pleasure.

"Mr. Coffyn, don't you think she ought to wear it?" begged Lucy. "Just this once, to the May ball."

"Does thee want to wear that dress, Daughter?" Tom questioned, not taking his eyes off her.

"I don't know. They are trying to make me."

"If thee is willing," he said kindly, "it would be a real gladness to me."

"But Mother——?" said Dencey with a final hanging back.

"Mother will not stand in the way of thy being gay. I'll tell her about it myself."

Dencey could not but see her father's relief at this change in her. It touched her. Yes, she must wear the dress.

The whole town was stirred by the ball. The Steeple House bell rang cheerily over the May-blooming town. It was six o'clock. Everybody had donned the best and gayest. Already the groups

were wending with happy laughter through Church Street.

"Mother, can't I go to the May ball?" lisped Sally.

"I'm going," announced Ariel. "Father's taking me."

Lydia looked at her eager little daughter with regret. Surely five years was very young to begin to go to dances. But five years went in Harmony.

"Well, I'll put on thy First Day dress," said Lydia. (How inconsistent that sounded!) "I am going over to see Hannah Price and her new baby."

Dencey was upstairs dressing. She had done her hair in the usual sweet and simple fashion. It did not occur to her to fix it otherwise. The dress for some reason looked prettier than ever. Perhaps the flush of excitement in her cheeks caused this. The sleeves were mere puffs at the shoulders, and the neck was cut in the broad shoulder to shoulder fashion of the period. Dencey did not like it. She had never seen her neck so white and fair save when going to bed or taking a bath. Father had not noticed this feature of the dress, that was certain.

Dencey threw an old shawl about her and went over to Virginie's, where against all protest she filled in the neck with tulle.

"Well, somehow, the tulle doesn't look so bad,"

Virginie conceded. "But you're a goose to wear it."

Virginie was in pure white and looked lovely.

When Dencey returned the family had departed. MacHugh was waiting in the parlor. With sudden realizing shyness she took off the old shawl.

Dencey had not been artful in putting on the dress—at least, not consciously artful. A sudden impulse toward the brilliant color had done it. Of course, she liked to look pretty. But she had not foreseen its effect on MacHugh. He gazed at her a long full moment without speaking. Then he stepped toward her. But she shrank back.

"No—oh, no," she whispered.

He stopped instantly.

"Sometimes you are cruel," he said.

"I don't mean to be. Oh, I don't mean to be." She put out her hand to him, and he caught it, trembling.

"I should know better," he said in low, moved tones. "It is your faithfulness now that makes me know how faithful you will be to me. But, oh—I do want you to love me."

She thrilled at his words to sudden happiness. Was she faithful to Jetsam with this warmth and life coming back to her?

"I think I never before saw beauty," said MacHugh, still looking into her face.

They came out of the house and walked under the white shadow of the locusts. The twilight was

hushed with magic. A moon, like a pale amber flower, hung waiting for them. The locusts were a celebration.

MacHugh was right. Perhaps she was in very fact for the first time beautiful. There is a sudden dawn that comes upon young girlhood. The loveliness lasts only a few months, but for that time the maiden is unearthly, like a tree in white bloom. The long sorrow had left its look of tender wisdom in Dencey's face. The mere youthful brilliance and fling were veiled in this shadowy knowledge. Even the red dress could not change that.

They came to the Great Hall—all confusion and laughter. The music of the reel was winnowing the air with vigorous rhythm. The candles had just won their own against the light of the open windows and shone out with their cheery flare. The locust fragrance blew freely across the dancers. Here was no place for sadness or for mood.

A circle drawn in the midst of the floor as usual protected the tiny Harmonites in their childish prancing. Dencey saw Ariel and Sally with little Columbine Neef, an already expert dancer, helping them.

Ariel glanced over to the door, hesitated, then came full run to Dencey, throwing both arms about her.

"I didn't know thee at first," he said. "I did not know thee at all."

Dencey discerned why the dear child had come. She knew that her beauty had drawn him.

Victor Neef came up.

"Say, Dencey, give me the second dance, won't you, please?" he insisted.

"Mine is the first," put in MacHugh. "And the third, fourth, and fifth," he leaned nearer. "Because I am going away," he pleaded, low-toned.

"Yes, yes," she answered.

Amadie Dufour came hurrying across the floor to claim a dance.

Oh, it was good to be young, full of life, and beautiful. Dencey's heart had always gone outward to beauty. Now she perceived with a sudden soaring of spirit that she herself was part of all beauty, a living, breathing part. It was good to be in the gay crowd again. Yes, good to be loved by MacHugh and everybody. For everybody was tender over Dencey this evening. Was she not in the midst of new romance?

Now she was swept into the midst of the reel. Only once or twice in the whole evening, and then when she was resting, did she think of Jetsam and the vast, tenantless places of the sea.

It was growing late (that is, for Harmony ball) when Columbine touched her arm.

"The boys say somebody wants to see you outside, Miss Dencey."

No doubt it was Lydia asking for the children, for it was high time that Ariel and Sally should go home.

Dencey hurried to the door, to the cool, fragrant May night.

As soon as she came out she realized that she should not have done it. Lydia was not there. She could see no one in the shadows. A sudden fear met her. McGinn and Seizler! Why shouldn't they come back to town and summon her like this?

"Who is it? What do you want?" she demanded. The fear made her voice harsh and impatient. She sometimes lapsed into the world's speech toward strangers.

"I want to speak to Miss Coffyn—Miss *Dencey* Coffyn."

The man's voice was unpleasant. Dencey sensed menace in it.

"I am Dencey Coffyn. What is it?"

She had moved into a stream of light from the door. A second's pause.

"Not thee! God almighty! Not thee."

What a strange cry! What an insult! Seizler always swore. Yet something kept her there.

"State your errand at once or I will call Mr. MacHugh," she said.

"Call MacHugh. Yes, call him. Do—do! Call thy lover to throw me down and bid me begone. Oh—oh!"

Words ended in groans. The tearing pain of them shot through Dencey. The man was using Friends' speech. Who was he, anyway?

A wildness seized her mind. The impossible seized her. Something she knew was not so. Something so glad that it seemed to terrorize her. Her voice caught in her throat, a high, harsh sound.

"Jetsam, oh, thee can't be. He is dead. Oh, who is thee?"

She rushed into the shadow, but the man stepped back.

"Yes, I am Jetsam, but thee is not Dencey. Don't touch me. Don't! Thee is sorry I came back."

"I am not sorry, Jetsam—Jetsam!"

For a moment again the doubt of Seizler came back. The man seemed to be drawing her farther into the shadows. She thought she saw another man under the trees. Jetsam would not speak like this.

"If thee is Jetsam, what is the matter with thee?" she demanded.

"Matter enough, matter enough," said the bitter voice. "I come clear across the world to thee—to thee—and find thee loving another man. Thee is false, false as sin. Oh—the world is broken! There is nothing—nothing left!"

She was sure now. Oh, poor, poor Jetsam! she had wronged him. What would she do? What *could* she do? She seized his arm, but he threw off her hand. If he had struck her it could not have hurt so much.

"What do I care for thee? A woman dressed up in scarlet—bare neck, bare arms. Has thee no shame? The Dencey I loved was modest. And I thought—I thought she was an angel."

Why did he talk so fast?—If he'd only let her speak. Oh, that Jetsam should say such words!

"I tell thee—we hadn't enough food and water, and Ben and Silas and Pedro went mad. But I—I didn't go mad because I had thee. Fool—fool! 'I'm going back to Dencey Coffyn,' I kept saying to myself, 'Dencey Coffyn in Nantucket. And I'll do it if I have to navigate across the Pacific in an open boat.' And I prayed! Sometimes to God, sometimes to Jesus, and sometimes—God help me, I was praying to thee—thee! dancing! False, false! a stranger to me forever. Dressed up in scarlet like——"

"Stop!" Dencey's word sounded like a pistol shot.

"How dares thee, Sam Jetsam, to come back here and call me names. I have died for thee because—because thee was dead." She began to sob, remembering her sorrow. "Thee is cruel. I'll never forgive thee. Never—never—never. As long as I breathe and live!"

She rushed past him. She saw for a second the tall young man step into the moonlight to let her pass. But she couldn't think what he looked like or anything else. Only to run away. To hide from this sorrow and shame, this abyss of black surprise.

She fled down the street—sent the street turnstile whirling. On—on!

The young man stood and watched her flight. The thin scarlet dress fluttering, running, darting, ashy rose in the moonlight, dim in the shadows. Flitting farther, a mere startled wraith.

The moon clouded, enmerging her in blackness. He knew he had lost her forever and ever.

CHAPTER XLIV

THE BIRD HAS FLOWN

THE tall young man in the shadows by the ballroom door stood where Dencey had left him. He seemed utterly uncertain what to do. The world had stopped so far as he was concerned. He knew nothing of passing time.

So he stood when who should come along but Lydia Coffyn, exactly as he had seen her in Nantucket. She met a youth coming out from the dance.

"Amadie," she asked, "will thee go in and tell Mr. Coffyn to bring Sally and Ariel out at once. A storm is coming up."

Could such things be? Lydia Coffyn calmly demanding her children at a ballroom door!

"Mrs. Coffyn—Mrs. Coffyn," he said brokenly.

Of course she did not know him.

"I'm Jetsam. Your family was not in Nantucket so I——"

She did not wait for him to finish.

"What is thee saying? What——"

She pulled him into the light that streamed across the walk—took one searching look into his face.

"My dear lad—my dear lad!" she cried. And Lydia, the calm, threw both arms about his neck, kissing him and weeping.

The tall young man was so moved that he could say no word at all.

"Caleb?" she asked. "Is my brother Caleb alive?"

"Yes, mame," Jetsam managed to falter. "We came home together. I've got thee a letter from him."

"Oh, beyond all belief! Tom, come here. Tom!"

Tom and the two children were hurrying out of the door. Tom couldn't believe it at first. Then he greeted him kindly.

The wonder of such welcome after all the years!

"But however was thee saved?" Tom asked. "Picked up, I suppose."

"No, sir, we navigated to Ceram Island."

"To Ceram Island! Off New Guinea? But I thought the ship was wrecked in the Tahiti region."

"Yes, sir. But we made the voyage. Of course, it was Captain Severance did it."

"The voyage! Why, man, that's halfway across the Pacific."

"Yes. Only three of us survived. Two of 'em died after we made port."

"Too bad! Marvelous, marvelous!" Tom began to shake Jetsam's hand as if he could never leave off his congratulations. He might be weary of whaling for himself, but this adventure thrilled his blood. "It's equal to Captain Bligh's open boat voyage from the Bounty," he asserted. "Nantucket will be proud of thee."

"Here's Captain Caleb's letter," said Jetsam, giving it to him. "That tells about it."

"Where's Dencey?" cried out Ariel. "I want to tell Dencey, quick."

"Let's go home," said Lydia with sudden caution. "Dencey will follow us there. Make haste. It's thundering."

They walked across the street to the Coffyn home.

Lydia lighted a lamp, and Tom shut the windows to keep it from blowing out. The thunder crashed sharp overhead.

Then MacHugh burst into the door without knocking.

"Where is Miss Dencey?" he inquired. "I cannot find her anywhere."

"Cannot! Wasn't she with thee?" Tom asked.

"Yes, but she suddenly disappeared. I can't find her."

"She might have gone to Virginie's," Lydia said, "to change her dress."

MacHugh hurried out. Jetsam stood in the room sullenly.

"Let him go," he thought. "He's stolen her." Then suddenly he wanted to run after him and knock him down. What right had he to go searching for Dencey Coffyn?

Tom hastened upstairs to shut the windows against the rain. How the storm crashed! Great heaven, Dencey was out in it! Of course she wasn't at Virginie's. Jetsam was well aware of that.

"Mrs. Coffyn," he said quickly, "I know where Dencey is. At least, I saw her since any of you."

"Thee! Thee saw her!"

"Yes—we had some words."

"Does thee mean she quarreled with thee, when thee had come back from death?" queried Lydia, aghast.

Jetsam suddenly realized that the "words" were practically all his own.

"No, she didn't, Mrs. Coffyn. I quarreled with her. I was wild-mad when I found her with this Mr. MacHugh."

"But how did thee know about MacHugh?"

"I came to the house here. Nobody was at home,

and an old lady was passing, and I asked her. She told me the whole thing—" Jetsam's wrath rose again—"How Dencey was accepting the attentions of MacHugh and—yes—had forgotten all about her dead lover—meaning me!"

"But——" began Lydia. Jetsam would not stop.

"So I went across the street and called her out and told her what I thought of her!"

"Well, what did thee think?"

A hidden warning in Lydia's tone stopped the career of his anger.

"I spoke very severely," he said. Jetsam began to feel the gentleness of the old Quaker atmosphere and of the Coffyn home, where hasty words were well-nigh unknown. Had he become a ruffian in that long sea experience? Words were not minced in the open boat.

"I spoke very severely. I had the right to. I told her she had been unfaithful to me. I——" Great heavens, how he was smoothing it down for Lydia's ears!

It was Lydia's turn to be severe.

"Well, Samuel, thee has been very foolish. Dencey has grieved for thee until her health was breaking. While there was the least hope of thy return she would go to no merrymaking; do nothing but think and—I trust—pray for thee. She ate practically nothing and could not sleep. We were all

frightened about her; and it was I who finally persuaded her thee was dead. I thought to take her off the rack.

"As to this matter of MacHugh—that's a strange story, Samuel. Dencey was threatened by two rough men here because she overheard and told a bad plot of theirs. They followed her, and MacHugh constituted himself her protector. He did it without her consent. He has been devotion itself. I could not have blamed her had she fallen in love with him. She is fond of him, that I know. What did thee say to her? The poor child has been through so much."

Jetsam could not answer. Lydia repeated her question.

"Oh, I have been a five times—ten times fool," he broke out. "I said——" He found he could not even repeat to Lydia the rough words he had spoken.

"I have made it impossible for her ever to love me again," he finished.

"Poor child! Poor, poor Dencey!"

Before he could answer, MacHugh, soaked to the skin, flung in at the door.

"I've searched everywhere—at every friend's she has—and she isn't with any of them."

Lydia stepped close to him and began to talk to him in low tones. The loud storm covered her telling, but Jetsam heard him exclaim. "Come back.

What, good Lord, the friend she thought was dead?"

The alarm in his tone was unmistakable. It told Jetsam more of Dencey's devotion even than Lydia's defense had told.

Oh, what had he done! What had he done! It is to his credit that his pity for Dencey for the moment overcame his sense of loss of her.

MacHugh came across the room in a towering rage.

"You ruffian," he said. "What did you do to that exquisite child? Where is she gone? Do you know?"

Just at that moment the lightning, with a terrible switching sound of its own, glared into the room, and the boom of thunder followed so loud that Lydia stopped her ears. Jetsam could think of nothing but that Dencey was out under those skies. By the time he could be heard to speak he could make no angry retort. Besides, had he not said enough in anger for one night? He had driven Dencey away!

"She ran down in that direction," he said, pointing. "A—well, a great distance."

Tom came down the stairs.

"What is the matter?" he queried.

Lydia explained as swiftly as she could. With every repetition of the story Jetsam's heart went lower into shame.

Tom took an unexpected view of the matter.

"I'd be scared enough if I thought Dencey was out in this. But she isn't. She'd have her senses about her even if her feelings were hurt." To Tom, who remembered living gales in the Pacific, this mere thunderstorm at home was not dreadful. "There's not a house in town that she couldn't go into and welcome. Jetsam's story explains where she is—in one of the houses down the street. We'd better go to bed."

"Go to bed!" shouted both young men at once, as though he had told them to shoot themselves.

"As far as I am concerned, I shall not rest a moment till I find her," said MacHugh, turning to the door.

"I'm going to find her," asserted Jetsam.

"No, you're not. You wouldn't be welcome to either of us."

(Gracious, how he appropriated Dencey!)

"Thee can't prevent me from searching for her—nor can anyone like thee."

Jetsam snatched his hat. He was trembling as if with ague.

Again Tom took an unexpected turn. He touched MacHugh's arm.

"Look here. Let the poor boy go with thee. He's been months on the Pacific in an open boat. Not

accountable for anything. Don't cross him like this and throw him into a fever. Has thee no mercy?"

"Open boat! Months!" repeated Lydia.

"Yes. I've been reading Caleb's letter. It's marvelous. I tell thee—Caleb sick, and Jetsam in charge of the boat half the time.

"Now, you're both of you fools—you youngsters," he added, "but not accountable under the circumstances. Lydia, has thee two extra overcoats?"

But before Lydia could answer the two dashed out into the storm.

MacHugh turned his rain-wet face to Jetsam.

"It's utterly unnecessary, your coming," he shouted.

"It's the most necessary thing I ever did in my life," retorted Jetsam.

"You have no claim on her now. You'd better go back."

"I certainly have claim. It's thee who interfered."

"Interfered!" The angry Scot laughed in the storm. "Ye'll see who is interfering when I talk with her," he said.

They had crossed Main Street, and MacHugh opened the first gate.

"All right," thought Jetsam. "Let him look in the wrong place. Dencey ran farther than that."

Jetsam hurried forward to the place where he had lost sight of that dear fleeing figure. Then he

knocked at a door. The amazed householder came down. Dencey Coffyn was not there.

Jetsam crossed the street and knocked at the next door, like a postman. Door after door, with no result. About five minutes after his departure MacHugh came knocking at the same doors with the same several results, getting the entire population of the street in an amaze of curiosity. What was all this searching for Dencey Coffyn? She'd been at the ball. Was she lost in the storm? But why? She could go in most anywhere, and who was the strange young man?

Jetsam finally came to the street's end. After that the road took to the woods, where the branches were groaning and thrashing in the wind. Would she have gone there? She would not be so foolish. But where should he search now?

As he stood questioning, McHugh passed him and gave the door its second summons. A window was thrown open with no little indignation. River Jordan, the town carter, put out his nightcapped head.

"W'at ye mean, MacHugh, rousin' me up this hour o' night?" he cried. "And I jist this minute tole someone Dencey Coffyn wasn't hyar. What would she be hyar fer? Me livin' alone. She hain't never been in my house. In a storm like this she wouldn't be nowhere but in her home."

He banged the window down.

Coming out the gate MacHugh met Jetsam. By this time both young men were thoroughly frightened.

"She might have been struck by lightning," groaned Jetsam.

"Or hit by a falling branch," echoed MacHugh. "Great heavens, how could you have been so cruel to her?"

"I'm going farther out there on the road," said Jetsam, and when MacHugh went with him he was too anxious to object.

They trudged through the mud of the country road, seeing their way by lightning flashes, and at every flash searching. Jetsam on one side of the road, MacHugh on the other.

"She wouldn't have come this far," said MacHugh, who knew less of Dencey's running powers than Jetsam did. "Let's go back to town and go separate ways, separate streets. Where there's a light we can venture to knock. We'll meet at the Coffyns."

They were almost friendly. The point was now not which one should find Dencey but that she should be found at all. They came back and searched in the little black sleeping village streets and lanes.

About an hour later they met at Tom Coffyn's.

Both had been unsuccessful. Again they parted and searched. Again met. Dawn began before the two weary young men stopped at the Tavern.

"As soon as it's light we'll search again," said Jetsam.

CHAPTER XLV

THE HIDDEN ONE

AS FOR Dencey, running away and away down the street, she was conscious of nothing but the terrible words Jetsam had spoken. Jetsam had come home and flung them at her. Jetsam hated her. Were such things to be believed—received into the mind?

Faintly she remembered how long, long ago, when she first saw Jetsam in Nantucket, he had made her run away like this. That Jetsam was real. This one was a horrible nightmare. If she could only wake up and find it a dream.

Someone was coming toward her on the street. Instinctively she darted into a side street. She must not meet anyone. Instinctively, too, she ran back toward the town center, then down another street at right angles to the first. She certainly was con-

fused. Her only thought was to run away from everybody. She couldn't explain. She couldn't talk to anyone.

She was panting. She could not run any more, but began to walk as fast as she could. She seemed to be going toward some goal, some relief.

Suddenly Dencey woke up. It was literally that. A flash of light and crash of thunder awoke her. She did not know where she was. The lonely road was far from town. She hadn't intended to come clear out like this. The moonlight was gone, its whiteness fast darkening with cloud. Terribly silent. But now she could hear the wind far off in the forest. coming like a presence, a low musical roar.

While she stood there the wind arrived, a great rushing giant who bent the trees double and cracked the branches. A flash of lightning. The trees began to bow and groan. Another flash showed her where she was—a mile and a half down the Mount Vernon road and not a house in sight.

Her first thought was not for herself. Virginia's dress! Priceless! From Paris! It would get wet. Perhaps she had torn it already. Why hadn't she thought of it before?

She turned and with sudden renewed energy ran for home. Now on the glimmery road, now under the roaring trees, the lightning nearer and nearer.

Already the air was damp and fresh and cold. She would never reach home before the rain.

Then the lightning showed her Mrs. Threm's lonely cottage back from the road. Old Mrs. Threm, whom nobody went to see because she was so disagreeable. Dencey herself had never been to her house, but she flew up the rough path and beat with both fists on the door. The house was perfectly black.

"Let me in. Let me in," she cried. "Virginie's dress will be ruined. Hurry, hurry! It's raining now."

(Would she never come?)

"It's I—Dencey Coffyn."

Poor Mrs. Threm, nightcapped and nightgowned and frightened to death, drew the bolt; and Dencey herself flung open the door. None too soon. One more crash, and the rain came in torrents, beating the little house like a thousand flails.

"Dencey Coffyn! Why, why, ye frightened me to death. Where'd ye come from? An', Lord! in a ball dress!"

Mrs. Threm shouted her questions above the roar of the storm. Dencey was too out of breath to answer.

"Tell me, quick. Is somebody hurted out on the road?"

"No—no—nobody hurt."

"Then what ye doin' out hyar? Up to some mischief, I'll be bound."

Mrs. Threm had an evil mind. Dencey shuddered at her possible accusations.

"No—no, I'm not up to mischief. Somebody hurt my feelings—and—and I ran away."

Dencey was still panting. Oh, if Mrs. Threm catechized her one word more she would burst out crying.

"Hit must 'a' been a turrible hurt to send ye way out hyar, I'm thinkin'. Who wus it, anyways? Young Mr. MacHugh?"

"No—no—no—he'd never say a word to hurt me." Dencey's heart suddenly warmed to MacHugh. Why hadn't she gone back to him? "Oh, Mrs. Threm, leave me alone. I—I just came in here out of the rain. Let me rest a minute, and I'll go home again."

"Not in this here thunderstorm. That thar fancy red dress 'ud be a sight, now, wouldn't it?" She laughed meanly. "Hain't answerin' no questions, air ye? Well, ye kin git upstairs into my spare room. I reckon I'll find out by mornin' what's the matter. There hain't any kivers up there on the bed. Take my cape coat."

Dencey took the cape and hurried up the ladder-like stairs. Mrs. Threm shouted after her in sudden glee.

"I'll bet a nickel hit was yer old lover came back. An' he faced ye with MacHugh."

Dencey fairly banged the door. Then sank down by the bed in a passion of tears.

Anger! That was uppermost in Dencey now. She wept and wept with it. The storm banged and flashed and poured on the thin roof above her head —a mighty chorus to her sorrow.

That Jetsam should come home and call her horrible, horrible names. And she had fairly gone down into the valley of death in grief for him. Jetsam was impossible. Cruel, ill-bred. Yes, all of that. Would MacHugh have so demeaned himself? She trowed not. She was through with Jetsam for always. He'd never have the chance to insult her again.

The storm quieted, and Dencey, with a great effort, brought her sobs into control. There was no use to weep. She'd have to face the whole matter. Her twenty years had taught her that.

She stood up—took off Virginie's dress, groped for a peg to hang it upon.

"The scarlet dress!" Well, it could no longer brand her, standing in her full white petticoat and trim waist. But he hadn't meant her dress, Jetsam hadn't. Not any outer thing that she could put off from her. He had meant her mind, her heart. He

hated her. Jetsam, who through all the years had adored. How foolishly he always praised every little act of hers. She remembered the look in his face when he used to watch her about her tasks in the old keeping room at Nantucket. Approval, adoration—never anything else. Could that be gone? That which had been her possession through all the years? Her possession and, yes, her pride. But it *was* gone—gone—gone!

She hid her face in her hands as the silent, painful memory began again.

MacHugh would not treat her this way. He was always so kind. But strangely she felt a wall between MacHugh and herself. Could she marry MacHugh with Jetsam alive in the world? Why not? She did love MacHugh. If she refused him she'd give him infinite pain. Jetsam would be sorrowful then. Well, Jetsam deserved it. She was glad she could hurt Jetsam.

How foolish Jetsam was to be angry about a scarlet dress and dancing. Gracious, how narrow and old-fashioned! But it was not these which really angered him. No use to deceive herself. It was MacHugh. Dencey knew that. He had found her with MacHugh, and it had broken Jetsam's heart. How did he know so much about MacHugh? Had somebody told?

Dencey did not want to see Jetsam's point of

view. That was the last thing she wanted to see. But she kept seeing it just the same, for that was Dencey.

Oh, had she done wrong to love MacHugh when he was so kind to her, so protecting? When he had saved her life from those rough men? Should she have kept off quite to herself, mournful and black-hearted, making the whole family anxious? Why—why was it such a muddle? She had done wrong. But if it were to do over again she couldn't see the way out.

The storm had begun again, pouring, flashing, and thundering.

She was worn out. Tired to death. It must be very late. She stood in the middle of the room, wilted and miserable.

Fragments of Jetsam's abominable love-making began to float across her mind.

"Sometimes I prayed to Jesus, sometimes, God help me, I prayed to thee. I'm going back to Dencey Coffyn if I have to go clear across the world!"

(What a frightful voyage that must have been in the open boat!)

"I came clear across the world to thee."

Suddenly, as she stood there, her mind was suffused with a strange dawn of joy. She didn't know what it was. Joy! A relief from some torture which had become habitual. She shook her head as if to

shake it off. But the glad thrill of it swept through her again like ringing bells.

Jetsam was not dead!

That picture of his body hideously shoved up against some lonely beach by the restless tide. It was not so! Jetsam was alive and well. He was here in Harmony. She didn't even have to go to Nantucket to find him. She could talk to him—tell him everything.

"Thee's a goose!" She so addressed herself. "Does thee like to be sworn at like a fish wife and called names?"

But the joy would not down. She went nervously to the window. Pried open Mrs. Threm's obdurate little pane. The sweet air of night and rain came in, utterly refreshing her. God suddenly seemed very, very near, full of understanding. He had surprised an answer to her prayers because He could not bear to see her suffer. God was good. It was a sudden deep sureness she had never had before. Eternally her Friend.

All this was the poorest reasoning in the world. Dencey knew a dozen Nantucket women whose sweethearts had met watery deaths in the face of year-long prayer. But this was not reasoning. It was life. Potential as those seeds the wind was blowing on the sill. It was a spiritual thing that had blown into Dencey's mind from the far spaces,

here to bloom and flourish and grow tall. It would be there all her years.

She would never again reason about God's love any more than she did about Lydia's or Tom's or Ariel's.

She wished she could go home, but that was impossible. It was nearly morning. The rain was pouring still, and she had only Virginie's dress. She lay down on the bed, drew Mrs. Threm's cape over her, for the air was delightfully cool; and, in a moment of time—was asleep.

CHAPTER XLVI

ACROSS THE SPACES OF THE SEA

IT WAS nine o'clock when Dencey awoke—an unheard-of hour in Harmony. She was startled and confused. She must go home at once. The relief of last night was with her yet, but not the exaltation. She became slowly aware of the difficult day ahead. She had forgiven Jetsam, but would he forgive her? Was such bitterness ever to be allayed? And what of MacHugh? When she thought of him she closed the eyes of her mind. And she was ashamed of running away as she had. There was no use in that and it might have made her mother anxious. Dazedly she put on Virginie's dress, hooked all the intricate fastenings. Then she threw Mrs. Threm's cape over her and went downstairs. Complete solitude! Mrs. Threm was no

doubt at her neighbor's farther out the road and gossiping. "About me," thought Dencey miserably.

She began the slow walk through the clay mud. Her slippers would be ruined. Except for the mud, it was a morning made in heaven. Calm, serene with the golden-green of May glittering everywhere. Not a tree was disturbed. The fragile bird sat on fragile nest or kept up a late morning singing. Nature seemed to assure all the world that it wasn't she who had cut up all those high jinks last night.

Old Joe Kepple came along in his top buggy. He stopped and asked her in. Dencey was glad enough of the rescue. She wrapped Mrs. Threm's smelly old cape closer about her, even drew up the hood. She also asked Joe to drive around a side street, which he most accommodatingly did, and set her down at her own door.

Within, the house was deserted. Was the whole day to be queer like that? Dencey went upstairs, took off the Paris dress, went painstakingly over its injuries and planned the mending and restitution. She must hurry to tell her mother she was safe at home. She washed and dressed herself in her usual gray, with a new snowy kerchief. She still had that strange lightness of relief, but she could not plan what to say to Jetsam. She could not even tell how wrong she had been.

She heard a step downstairs. Mother had come in at last. Dencey would go down and tell her all. She felt very much like a small hurt child coming back to Lydia's arms.

She entered the keeping room. It was not her mother at all. A stranger stood there. She was seeing him for the first time. But well enough she knew him! So different he was from the awkward boy who had bade her good-bye. Tall now, with the spare, bronzed face of the out of doors, and that look of achievement about him which was in itself a grace.

If she was startled, he was yet more so.

"Dencey! Oh, thank God—thank God thee is safe!"

It was no swearing this time, but fervent prayer.

"We looked for thee all night. Everybody is looking everywhere. Frightened to death!"

"I'm sorry. I ran down the Mount Vernon road —far and far. I was so angry at what thee said to me—so frightened—so frightened—and——"

He suddenly bowed his face in his hands.

"I have cut myself off. I have cut myself off. I cannot even ask forgiveness. I acted like the ill-born ruffian that I am."

"But, Jetsam"—she spoke in a small commonplace voice—'thee is not ill born. I meant to tell thee that. We've found out——"

She could not finish, that great joy came back to her. She crossed over to him and laid a trembling hand on his arm.

"Thee's—thee is alive," she faltered.

He lifted his head, gave her one astonished look, and then clasped her in his arms. These two small human creatures had found each other in spite of the world spaces of the sea.

The old song is wise that saith

> Over oceans and mountains
> Love will find out a way.

They were terribly selfish. They forgot that anyone was needing to find Dencey. They forgot everything; trying to speak, failing, and trying again.

"I always thought thee was an angel," Jetsam managed to say at last, "but I guess I didn't even have a notion what a real angel thee is."

"I can't believe thee's the same Jetsam," said Dencey, wondering at him. "Thee's so grown up, like a different person."

"Well, so is thee. Oh, Dencey, how could thee forgive me? I'll never forgive myself."

"Does thee think those things about me that thee said?"

"Oh, don't. When thee asks that it's the worst reproof of all."

He took her loving face between his hands.

"Dencey! Dencey! Dencey!" he said.

Ariel came running in.

"Why, Dencey's here. Hooray! And everybody's just looking and looking. Why didn't thee tell us?"

"That's so," said Jetsam. "Gracious me! Where's thy mother?"

"They're outside by the Great Hall—all of 'em—and Mr. MacHugh."

Ariel ran out and across the street to them.

"Jetsam's found her," he shouted. "He's kissing her and calling her names."

When the family came into the house MacHugh was not with them.

It was a festival day, no less. Everybody in Harmony knew that Dencey Coffyn's lover had come back, that he had quarreled with her, and that she had run away out to Mrs. Threm's and had come back. There was no possible privacy about the matter. So the public had to be faced.

Whenever a visitor came to Harmony, he was the guest of all—that is, if he were interesting. This was a custom from Community days. Now everybody came to see Jetsam forthwith.

Was not Dencey Coffyn's lover on exhibition?

Such a happy, happy morning! Maclure came, and Frances Wright, Thomas Say and Lucy Sis-

taire, Madame Fretageot, the Neefs—everybody rejoiced with them.

Jetsam, as he saw these forceful people, heard their interesting talk (for Maclure and Say had just returned from a naturalizing expedition and were full of the wonders), realized what a remarkable place he was asking Dencey to leave.

"And I called it a damnable town," was his inner reproof.

Lesueur objected to the whole matter.

"We are glad you were saved from the so terrible shipwreck. But I am not glad that you take away my most talented pupil."

After he was gone Tom said:

"Samuel, Lydia and I have been talking together. It seems too bad for Dencey to go away with thee to Nantucket and then thee leave her there for thy long voyage. Why couldn't she say here? After you are married."

Dencey's face sobered. Partings came so soon to the seafarer's wife.

"I didn't think I'd leave her in Nantucket, Captain Coffyn," said Jetsam. "I'm to go with Captain Caleb in whatever ship he gets, and he says I shall go as his mate."

Jetsam paused. He was proud of this most unusual raise for a second voyage. "And Captain

Caleb said (thee see's I asked him)—he said I might take Dencey with me—if she'll come."

"A voyage!" cried Dencey, shining in face and voice. "A voyage! Perhaps I would see Chile or Easter Island or Naples and Vesuvius, and I can make pictures and pictures and pictures of everything I see."

"I can't object to it," said Tom. "My mother took such a bridal voyage with my father. I can't blame thee for wanting her."

The two began their joyous planning; but Dencey did not fail to note the bend of her father's head as he quietly left the room.

CHAPTER XLVII

OFF TO THE ISLE OF STARR

IN ALL the excitement Lydia could scarcely get them to their midday dinner; but they gathered at last. After the silent grace Ariel spoke up with that air of judgment which little boys sometimes assume.

"Well, there's one thing I know, anyway. This town is going to be a poorer town now that Mr. MacHugh is gone."

"Gone!" echoed Dencey. "But he can't be gone." It came like a thunderclap on her happiness.

"Well, he isn't completely gone. He's out at the Blackmore's taking his dinner. But he's said goodbye to everybody. I didn't cry, neither."

By the blinking of Ariel's eyes there had been some difficulty about this.

"He mustn't go without my saying good-bye," Dencey spoke again.

"I saw him, Daughter, on the street," said Tom, "and he sent his good-byes to thee."

"But that won't do. It won't do. He is going to Scotland." Dencey had risen from the table. "I'll have to go and say good-bye to him," she said in a startled voice.

"Thee must not do that," Tom advised. "Can't thee see it will not mend matters?"

"Please don't go." Jetsam rose with her. "Why, it would look very strange. I'd really much rather thee wouldn't do it," he said with a proprietary air.

"He sent his good-byes to prevent this very thing," added Lydia.

"I can't help it." Dencey spoke with Quaker finality. "It may not seem right to any of you, but it does to me, and I must go."

She left the room, got her bonnet, and hurried out.

"Well, Jetsam," smiled Tom, "we're not giving thee a wife thee can easily control."

"If I could, it wouldn't be Dencey," said Jetsam gallantly, but he looked very uncomfortable.

"How did thee like the red Paris dress?" blundered Tom.

"I never saw her so beautiful," said Jetsam. And he meant it too.

The Blackmore's was a farm at the edge of town. Dencey arrived there just as the folk were finishing dinner.

MacHugh, with a most astonished face, came out on the front porch to her summons.

"Dencey, my dearest! Why are you here? Did I make a mistake in leaving you? Oh, do you—do you love me after all?" He caught both her hands, and before she could prevent him drew her to him.

"No—no," she said, frightened. "I can't ever go with thee. Jetsam is here."

"But do you love me? Tell me. Don't be afraid." He still held her insistently.

"No, no, no. I love Jetsam. I have always, always loved him."

He stepped back, and Dencey's head bowed before the cold anger in his tone.

"Did you come out all this way to tell me that? It was quite unnecessary."

"They told me not to come. They told me it would be worse." Dencey spoke fast like a child. "But I had to come. I had to say good-bye. Thee is going away."

He did not help her at all.

"Thee's been so good—so good to me, and I have been nothing but a punishment and curse to thee. I didn't want to hurt thee. I have done wrong, ter-

rible wrong, some way. I can never make it right. And thee is going away alone—alone."

She was almost sobbing. The tenderness of her bowed head and shaking hands had to be sweet to him in spite of his sorrow and chagrin. He took her hands again, trying to steady them, though his own trembled.

"It isn't your fault, dear child. You are exceedingly desirable to both of us. One of us must go. Try—try not to remember."

"I will remember. I always will remember!"

She kissed his hands that held hers, turned, and hurried away as fast as she could go.

She knew what she said was true. As long as she lived this would be painful to her—a deep thorn of remembrance. It was her first experience of a wrong that could not anywise be set right.

CHAPTER XLVIII

"REVELATIONS"

THAT evening they gathered once more at the Coffyn table for the simple supper. Dencey was still subdued from her experience with MacHugh. Her face still showed the tears. And Jetsam, in consequence, was uncomfortable.

But the gathering at table of this family was for Jetsam fraught with happy memories.

"It's strange," he said. "When I heard you folks had gone from Nantucket I thought something had perished that could never be again. But here I find it—just the same home out here in the wilderness. I might have known you could make it anywheres."

He might have added just the same haven and

peace, for so it had always been to poor Jetsam. He observed that Mr. Coffyn had as usual brought a stranger to the table, a curious person, Mr. Gay, who eyed one so keenly when introduced. Whenever Jetsam looked up he caught Mr. Gay's eye.

There was never any end to Nantucket news, and Jetsam was telling it. Stephen had come home from his first voyage. Aunt Lovesta, hungry for something to do, was teaching the boys in the Fragment school. Peggy was saving her money and said that when she got enough she was "comin' out to jine up with those Coffyns or bust."

Tom responded with a tale of a funny old sailor he had taken on at the Canary Islands. Jetsam, whose mood had long ago melted, threw back his head with his bright infectious laugh.

At that moment Mr. Gay jumped from his seat with a cry—it was no less.

"Who are you? Who are you, to laugh like that?"

Jetsam was too startled to reply.

"Who are you, to have my Mary's laugh and—yes—yes—" he peered at Jetsam—"my Mary's face!"

Tom had got from his seat and was at his guest's side.

"Mr. Gay, thee isn't well. Come out here with me—into the air."

"I am well. Don't interrupt me. The young man must answer me."

Mr. Gay had an authority not seen before. "The resemblance is too great. There must be some connection. Who are your people?"

"I haven't any," Jetsam answered. "An old Indian woman claimed me, and a man too. But I happen to know now, I came from a wreck."

Jetsam's face flushed sensitively, speaking of his birth. He too thought Mr. Gay was ill.

"What wreck?"

"The *British Queen,* sir, wrecked off Nantucket."

"Oh, God, am I hearing right? Did you really say the *British Queen?* The *British Queen?"*

Mr. Gay looked from one to the other, as if he too thought his wits were astray.

"Yes. I am sure of that now," said Jetsam kindly. "Old Bill has told the whole story—how he found my mother in the water tied to a spar and killed her so he could have the spar himself. Somehow, he didn't kill me."

Mr. Gay cried out as though the deed were just completed.

"It was my Mary—my Mary. I tied her to the spar that the good captain gave me, and my little child Samuel beside her. He was crying, poor child. I couldn't cling to the spar myself. It wasn't big enough."

Jetsam gazed straight into Mr. Gay's face. His voice was awed and slow as he said:

"Then I believe thee is my father!"

He reached out and caught Dencey's hand, as though in this crisis he must have her touch. She felt his hand quivering. Tom grasped Mr. Gay's shoulder.

"Mr. Gay! What an amazing thing! Thee was really on the *British Queen?* Jetsam, how does thee know this story? Why didn't thee know it before?"

"Because old Bill wouldn't tell." Jetsam looked as if he were waking up from a dream. "He was afraid his murder would be found out. He always did seem somehow afraid of me—even though he beat me so terribly. But when he was dying off Calleo last year he got scareder yet and told the whole thing. It seems he caught the spar in the water, and when it would not float the two of them, he cut the ropes and shoved the woman off. When he got to the beach and saw I was alive, that miserable baby, he didn't dare to kill me too. He carried me across the Commons to Injun Jill's hut. He made her keep me hid. But Jill was glad enough to hide me. She clung to me like a leech, poor thing. Between them they gave me a dreadful life."

"But how did thee learn all this story?"

"The sailors brought it back to Dickey Dicks. And Dickey told me."

"Tom," said Lydia, her voice trembling, "there's not the least doubt about it. It's as clear as can be."

Mr. Gay kept saying over and over, "You are my son. You certainly are my son!" He did not touch Jetsam, not so much as his hand. His wonder was too great. How keenly—with what embarrassed scrutiny the two men gazed at each other!

"Wait," said Dencey. "Wait till I bring something."

She ran upstairs and brought down the little clothes Jill had given her.

"Does thee remember these, Mr. Gay?" she asked.

He looked at the poor little relics. "No," he said, shaking his head.

Lydia brought a candle, for it was getting dark.

"Look at this, Mr. Gay," she said, spreading out the embroidered pillow under the light, showing the name on it.

"Yes," he said slowly. "I do remember that, and her dear hands upon it. Mary embroidered it on shipboard."

"But what are those?" interposed Jetsam.

Lydia told him.

"And they've grieved me all these years," said Dencey—"that I should have them instead of thee. I wrote thee about them. Didn't thee get that letter, either?"

"Darling, I told thee I got no letters from thee at all."

All of them looked into each other's faces as if they were seeing ghosts, or rather as if old ghosts were being dispelled.

"Why doesn't he kiss Jetsam?" thought Dencey. "Why doesn't he act as if he were his son?"

Mr. Gay was speaking to Tom.

"You have been very kind to me, I have always realized how kind. For I could not tell about myself as other people would. I—even now it seems strange to me to be saying Mary's name—aloud. You see, I felt I killed her. If she hadn't married me she would be alive to-day. Her father said that over and over again. He was Lord Waite, a proud man. He was very angry at me for marrying Mary."

One could hardly imagine the shy, gentle Mr. Gay withstanding the anger of Lord Waite.

"We met by chance, Mary and I—at least, it seemed chance—but we loved each other from the time we were children."

Here Jetsam gave Dencey a glance.

"Perhaps the constant opposition fanned the flame. I was the schoolmaster's son—just a poor student youth. Lord Waite, of course, did not tolerate me for an instant. I—yes, I did it. I persuaded Mary to go off with me. She loved me, or I couldn't have dared to do it. We were married

in the next village and from there went to London. Impractical fool that I was, I could not get work there. Only a little teaching, which was not enough for us to live upon. I soon realized how I had taken her from comforts and luxuries to the first hardships she had known. She was patient, but what did she know of poor woman's work? After Samuel was born—" he looked over at Jetsam, still that unbelieving, wondering look—"I determined to come to America. My father helped me. In the new land I thought to have better fortune. We sailed on the *British Queen*—— Well, you know the rest."

Suddenly Ariel's high little voice interrupted. To him this was one of Mr. Gay's stories.

"Now tell why thee carried the lightning rod. I always wanted to ask thee, and Mother wouldn't let me."

Mr. Gay drew the child to his knee.

"You wouldn't understand if I told you, little man. I hope you never will understand such sorrow. I suppose," he said, still looking hard at Jetsam's face, "I was foolish to feel so sure I had brought death to Mary. I do not feel so now."

"But," said Tom, still only half able to believe all this, "how did thee happen to come out here to Harmony? Such a coincidence!"

"I heard of the place from your Nantucket people and how those who studied the new sciences

were welcome here. I got no welcome otherwhere for my zoölogical work. I had gone to Nantucket to visit Mary's grave."

"Her grave," echoed Jetsam softly. "Was it far down in the sou'west corner of the Quaker graveyard? The only stone in the yard—and marked 'Mary Gay?' "

"Yes."

"I've passed it often," said Jetsam, and his eyes filled with tears. "I wish thee had a picture of her."

"I have," said Mr. Gay. "I'll go home and get it."

He rose, putting Ariel from his knee.

"I'd like to go with thee," said Jetsam.

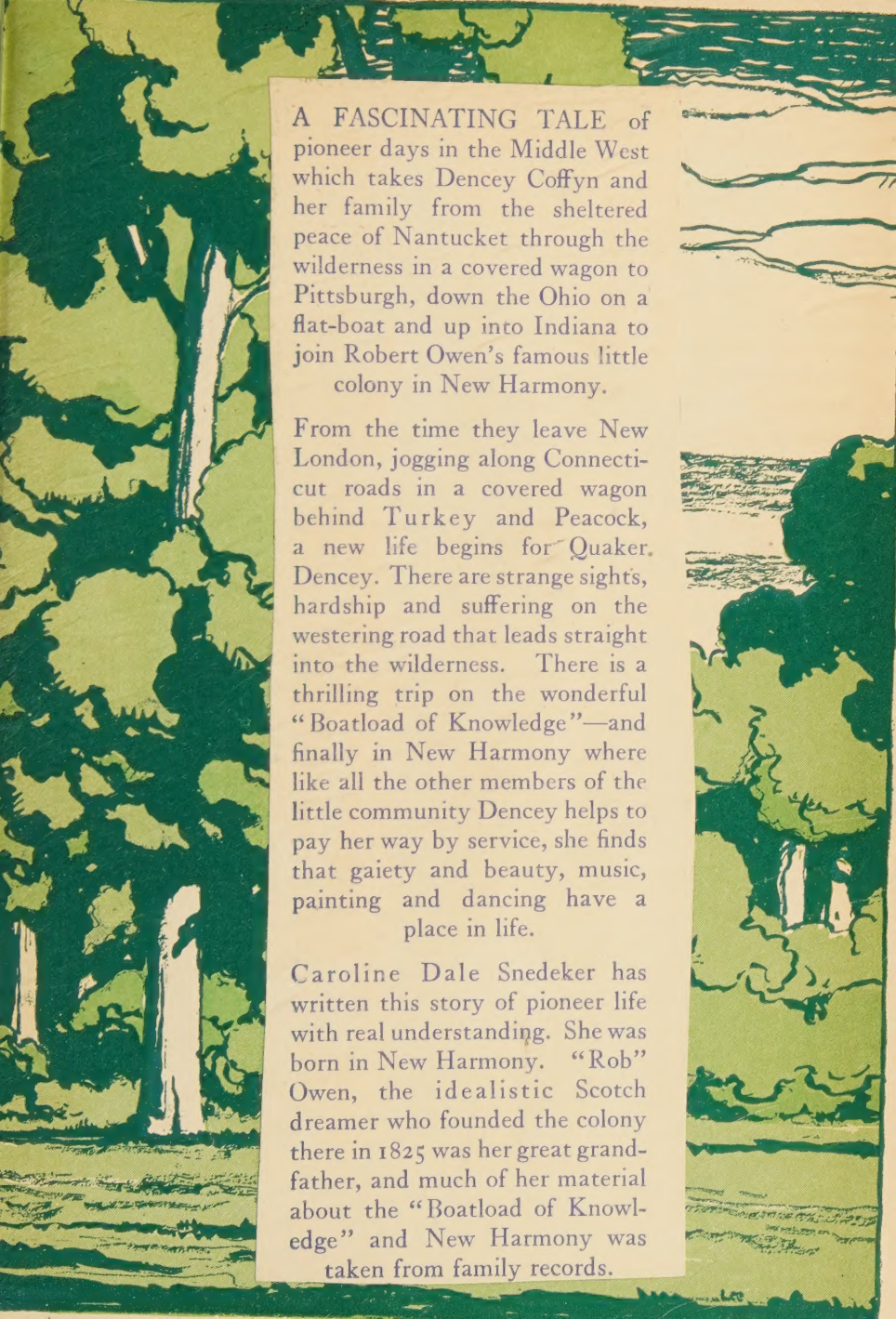
A look of deep pleasure passed over Mr. Gay's face. He seemed for the first time to sense that his long loneliness was over.

"Thank you, Samuel," he said.

That same evening, after the others had gone to bed, Jetsam stood at the bottom of the stairway, his arm about Dencey. Together they were looking at a miniature. A tender face, with Jetsam's blue eyes and his whimsical smile on a mouth far more beautiful than Jetsam's ever hoped to be. Exquisite, delicate, and fair.

"She was like that," said Jetsam softly. "My mother was like that. And I thought she was Injun Jill!"

THE END



A FASCINATING TALE of pioneer days in the Middle West which takes Dencey Coffyn and her family from the sheltered peace of Nantucket through the wilderness in a covered wagon to Pittsburgh, down the Ohio on a flat-boat and up into Indiana to join Robert Owen's famous little colony in New Harmony.

From the time they leave New London, jogging along Connecticut roads in a covered wagon behind Turkey and Peacock, a new life begins for Quaker Dencey. There are strange sights, hardship and suffering on the westering road that leads straight into the wilderness. There is a thrilling trip on the wonderful "Boatload of Knowledge"—and finally in New Harmony where like all the other members of the little community Dencey helps to pay her way by service, she finds that gaiety and beauty, music, painting and dancing have a place in life.

Caroline Dale Snedeker has written this story of pioneer life with real understanding. She was born in New Harmony. "Rob" Owen, the idealistic Scotch dreamer who founded the colony there in 1825 was her great grandfather, and much of her material about the "Boatload of Knowledge" and New Harmony was taken from family records.